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ROYAL WINDSOR.

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HISTORY OF TWO QUEENS.

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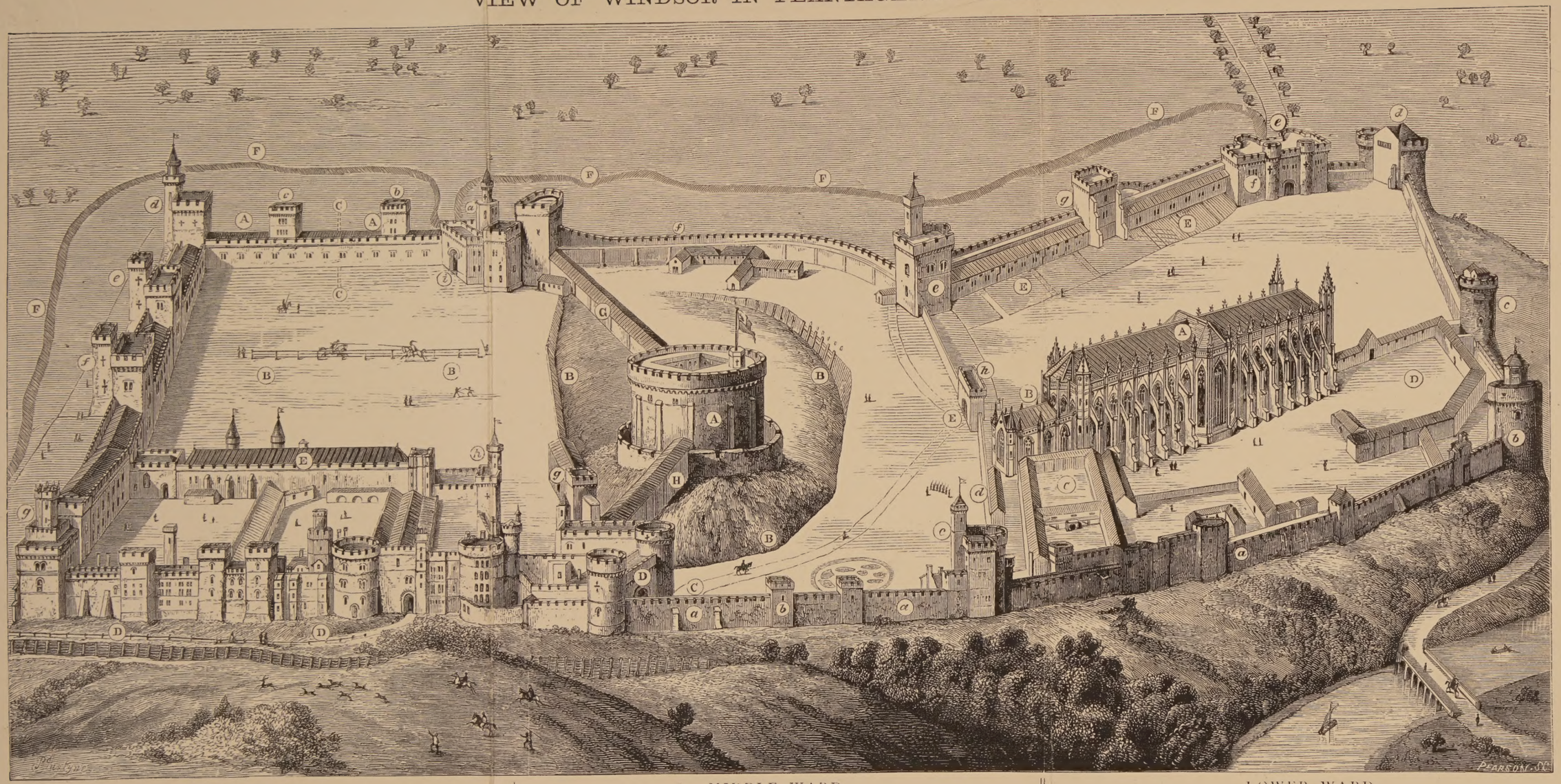
VIEW OF WINDSOR IN PLANTAGENET PERIOD.



UPPER WARD.

A A First King's House.
B B Jousting ground.
C C Underground passage.
D D Third King's House.
E St. George's Hall.
F F Outer ditch.
a Devil's tower.
b Wardrobe tower.
c Exchequer tower.
d Watch tower.
e Old Maid's tower.
f Library tower.
g North-east tower.
h King John's tower.
i South porte.

MIDDLE WARD.

A Norman Keep.
B B Keep ditch.
C Inner gate.
D Norman tower.
E Middle gate.
F F Outer ditch.
G First covered way.
H Second covered way.
a a North curtain.
b Gunpowder tower.
c Winchester tower.
d Guard-room.
e Lieutenant's lodgings.
f Maid of Honour's garden.
g Tennis court.

LOWER WARD.

A St. George's chapel.
B St. Edward's chapel.
C Deanery.
D Minor Canons.
E E Poor Knights.
F Outer ditch.
a Site of Almoner's tower.
b Curfew tower.
c Garter tower.
d Salisbury tower.
e Outer gate.
f Cole House.
g Garter House.
h Gunner's tower.

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ROYAL WINDSOR

BY

WILLIAM HEPWORTH DIXON

VOLUME I.

Fourth Edition.

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PREFACE.

By Her Majesty's gracious leave, I have been permitted to inspect the Royal house, and every other part of Windsor Castle, in and out, above ground and below ground, with the utmost freedom and completeness, and to peruse all documents preserved at Windsor which concern the structure and its history.

With the help of General Ponsonby, and Sir John Cowell, K.C.B., I have used this privilege with the substantial result of fixing the sites of the various kings' houses, and identifying those of many personal events. In these labours, I have received great assistance from R. R. Holmes, Esq., Her Majesty's librarian, W. Seabrook, Esq., and R. Howe, Esq., Her Majesty's clerk of the works.

The literary materials of these studies were

partly collected during my researches on the Tower; but they have been greatly enriched by the late publications of the Master of the Rolls, and especially by the researches of W. Hardy, Esq., H. R. Luard, Esq., and the Rev. Professor Stubbs.

St. James's Terrace, Regent's Park.

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ROYAL WINDSOR.

CHAPTER I.

CASTLE HILL.

1878.

A STEEP chalk bluff, starting from a river margin with the heave and dominance of a tidal wave is Castle Hill, now crowned and mantled by the Norman keep, the royal house, the chapel of St. George, and the depending gardens, terraces, and slopes.

Trees beard the slope and tuft the ridge. Live waters curl and murmur at the base. In front, low-lying meadows curtsey to the royal hill. Outward, on the flanks, to east and west, run screens of elm and oak, of beech and poplar; here, sinking into clough and dell: there mounting up to smiling sward and wooded knoll. Far

in the rear lie forest glades, with walks and chases, losing themselves in distant heath and holt. By the edges of dripping wells, which bear the names of queen and saint, stand aged oaks, hoary with time and rich in legend: patriarchs of the forest, wedded to the readers of all nations by immortal verse.

A gentle eminence, the Castle hill springs from the bosom of a typical English scene.

Crowning a verdant ridge, the Norman keep looks northward on a wide and wooded level, stretching over many shires, tawny with corn and rye, bright with abundant pasture, and the red and white of kine and sheep, while here again the landscape is embrowned with groves and parks. The stream curves softly past your feet, unconscious of the capital, unruffled by the tide. Beyond the river bank lie open meadows, out of which start up the pinnacles of Eton College, the Plantagenet school and cloister, whence for twenty-one reigns the youth of England have been trained for court and camp, the staff, the mitre, and the marble chair. Free from these pinnacles, the eye is caught by darksome clump, and antique tower, and distant height; each darksome clump a haunted wood, each antique tower an elegy in

stone, each distant height a storied and romantic hill. That darksome clump is Burnham wood; this antique tower is Stoke; yon distant heights are Hampstead Heath and Richmond Park. Nearer to the eye stand Farnham Royal, Upton park, and Langley Marsh; the homes of famous men, the sceneries of great events.

Swing round to east or south, and still the eye falls lovingly on household spots. There, beyond Datchet ferry, stood the lodge of Edward the Confessor, and around his dwelling spread the hunting grounds of Alfred and other Saxon kings. Yon islet in the Thames is Magna Charta Island; while the open field, below the reach, is Runnymede.

The heights all round the Norman keep are capped with fame — one hallowed by a saint, another crowned with song. Here is St. Leonard's hill; and yonder, rising over Runnymede, is Cooper's hill. Saints, poets, kings and queens, divide the royalties in almost equal shares. St. George is hardly more a presence in the place than Chaucer and Shakespeare. Sanctity and poetry are everywhere about us; in the royal chapel, by the river-side, among the forest oaks, and even in the tavern yards. Chaucer and

Shakespeare have a part in Windsor hardly less pronounced than that of Edward and Victoria, that of St. Leonard and St. George.

Windsor was river born and river named. The stream is winding, serpentine; the bank by which it rolls was called the 'winding shore.' The fact, common to all countries, gives a name which is common to all languages. Snakes, dragons, serpentines, are names of winding rivers in every latitude. There is a Snake river in Utah, another Snake river in Oregon; there is a Drach river in France, another Drach river in Switzerland. The straits between Paria and Trinidad is the Dragon's Mouth; the outfall of Lake Chiriqui is also the Dragon's Mouth. In the Morea, in Majorca, in Ionia, there are Dragons. There is a Serpent islet off the Danube, and a Serpentaria in Sardinia. We have a modern Serpentine in Hyde Park!

Windsor, born of that winding shore-line, found in after days her natural patron in St. George.

With one exception, all the Castle builders were men and women of English birth and English taste: Henry Beauclerc, Henry of Winchester, Edward of Windsor, Edward of York, Henry the Seventh, Queen Elizabeth, George the Fourth,

and Queen Victoria; and these English builders stamped an English spirit on every portion of the pile—excepting on the Norman keep.

Ages before the Normans came to Windsor, a Saxon hunting-lodge had been erected in the forest; not on the bleak and isolated crest of hill, but by the river margin, on 'the winding shore.' This Saxon lodge lay hidden in the depths of ancient woods, away from any public road and bridge. The King's highway ran north, the Devil's Causeway to the south. The nearest ford was three miles up the stream, the nearest bridge was five miles down the stream. A bridle-path, such as may still be found in Spain or Sicily, led to that Saxon lodge; but here this path was lost among the ferns and underwoods. No track led on to other places. Free to the chase, yet severed from the world, that hunting-lodge was like a nest. Old oaks and elms grew round about as screens. Deep glades, with here and there a bubbling spring, extended league on league, as far Chertsey bridge and Guildford down. This forest knew no tenants save the hart and boar, the chough and crow. An air of privacy, and poetry, and romance, hung about this ancient forest lodge.

Seeds of much legendary lore had been already sown. A builder of that Saxon lodge had been imagined in a mythical king—Arthur of the Round Table, Arthur of the blameless life—a legend which endures at Windsor to the present day. There, Godwin, sitting at the king's board, had met his death, choked with the lie in his wicked throat. There, Edward the Confessor had lisped his prayers, and cured the halt and blind. There, too, the Saxon princes, Tosti and Harold, were supposed to have fought in the king's presence, lugging out each other's locks, and hurling each other to the ground. Of later growth were other legends; ranging from the romance of the Fitz-Warines, through the Romaunt of the Rose, down to the rhyme of King Edward and the Shepherd, the mystery of Herne the Hunter, and the humours of the Merry Wives.

William the Conqueror preserved his Saxon hunting-lodge by the river side, but built his Norman keep on the Castle Hill—perhaps on the ruins of a Celtic camp, certainly round the edges of a deep and copious well.

Henry Beauclerc removed his dwelling from the river margin to the crest of hill, building the

First King's House. This pile extended from the Devil's tower to the Watch tower, now renamed Victoria tower. A part of Beauclerc's edifice remains in massive walls of the Devil's tower, and a cutting through the chalk, sustained by Norman masonry, leading from a shaft under the Queen's apartments to the southern ditch.

Henry of Winchester, a man of higher genius as an architect, built the Second King's House, sweeping into his lines the lower ground, which he covered by walls and towers, including Winchester tower, and the whole curtain by Curfew tower and Salisbury tower, round to the Lieutenant's lodgings, now called Henry the Third's tower. The Second King's House, long since ruined and removed, stood on the site of the present cloisters. Much of Henry of Winchester's work remains; in fact, the circuit of the lower ward is mainly his, both walls and towers, from the Devil's tower, touching the upper ward, round to Curfew tower in the north-west angle of the lower ward.

Edward of Windsor built the Third King's House, fronting towards the north, and gave the upper ward its final shape. On introducing a new patron saint to Windsor, Edward removed his own

lodging, and renounced the lower ward entirely to the service of St. George. First came the Chapel of St. George; next came the College of St. George; then came the Canons of St. George; lastly, came the Poor Knights of St. George. The central ground was given up to the chapel, and the adjoining quarter to the college. From Curfew tower to the Lieutenant's lodgings, all the ground was consecrated to the saint. The first tower, reckoning from the south, became Garter House, the second Chancellor's tower, the third Garter tower, while the land within the walls was covered by residences for the military knights. An area equal to the upper baily was surrendered to his patron saint.

Edward of York rebuilt St. George's Chapel on a larger scale; for Edward of York had heavy sins to weigh him down, and pressing need for saintly help.

Henry of Richmond roofed that chapel, built a 'new tower' in the King's House, and made a fair causeway from Windsor to London—the first road ever made between the castle and the capital.

Queen Elizabeth built the gallery which bears her name, and raised the great terraces above the Thames. Before her time the scarp was rough

and steep : she built this solid wall, and laid this level road.

George the Fourth raised the Norman keep in height, flanked the park entrance with another tower, opened St. George's gate, buttressed the North-east tower, and called his new edifice Brunswick tower.

Like Queen Elizabeth, Queen Victoria has devoted her attention rather to the slopes and gardens than the structure ; but the few additions of her reign have been effected with a proper reverence for the ancient pile. Her Majesty has cleared off slum and tenement from the slopes, and opened the southern terrace, just as Elizabeth opened the northern terrace. Work has been done in cloister and in chapel. As Henry of Richmond made a road from Windsor to London, Queen Victoria has brought two railways to her castle gates.

Since the days of Edward of Windsor the Castle hill has kept the triple character—upper ward, middle ward, and lower ward—baily of the King, baily of the keep, and baily of St. George —the residence of our sovereign, the symbol of our power, the altar of our saint.

CHAPTER II.

NORMAN KEEP.

1086–95.

The Norman conqueror planted his donjon on the Windsor ridge, not as a house to dwell in, but a prison in which to lodge his enemies.

Standing high and lonely, far from any road, and covered by the foliage of an ancient chase, his keep was one of the strongest works in England. Norwich, Nottingham, Lancaster, equalled his Windsor keep in strength of site, but these great castles had the drawback of having populous towns before their gates. Dover and Bamborough were stronger than Windsor; but those fortresses were open to the sea, and readily approached by ships. Windsor lay inland, hidden in a screen of oaks. Staines and Maidenhead were the nearest hamlets. With the exception of some swineherds and charcoal-burners, no one lived near his Saxon hunting-lodge and his Norman keep.

No captive ever got away from this Norman

keep. A crop of rock, starting from a crest of rock, with scarp abrupt and sheer, the donjon was a citadel within a citadel; the builders having edged the crop and taken in every yard of solid ground. A stair, covered by defending works, led upward from the level of the baily to the basement of the keep.

Ralph Flambard, bishop of Durham, first state prisoner in the Tower of London, got away; but Robert de Mowbray, earl of Northumbria, first state-prisoner in the Windsor keep, though quick to plan and bold to execute, rotted in the keep for many years, and died at length a prisoner of the crown.

The story of Mowbray's crime and punishment in the days of William Rufus, is the opening chapter in a history of the Norman keep.

Mowbray, a Norman baron, came across the sea in search of fortune. Geoffrey, his uncle, was earl of Northumbria, an office little less than regal; since his province, stretching from the Humber to the Scottish dales, had never yet submitted to the Norman yoke. As hard of fist as he was hot of blood, Mowbray soon fought his way to power and rank. Often he was with the king; sometimes he was against the king; but he was always on his uncle's

side. Geoffrey was priest and bishop as well as earl and warrior. As a prelate, he was swayed by other interests than control the action of a secular peer; but whether Mowbray's uncle, the bishop, was with the crown or against the crown, Mowbray was always on that uncle's side.

Like other Normans, Geoffrey was against that independence of England which the Conqueror had provided in his will, by leaving Normandy to his elder son and England to his younger son. The Norman party wished to keep this island open to their raids. They wanted a hunting-ground for handsome girls; they looked to find a market for the swords of their younger sons. A separate kingdom, England would be English, and the Norman settlers would be swallowed up. With Odo, the king's uncle, Geoffrey and Mowbray rose in 'defence' of duke Robert's right; by which they meant the right of French vassals to reign as English kings, and that of Norman knights to rule as English earls.

From these rebellious Normans, Rufus turned to his English friends. His cause was theirs; the independence of their native land. If they upheld his right, he promised to restore their ancient laws; to make every man free before the courts,

and leave to every man his own estate—to hold and to devise as he saw good.

The English flew to arms. A ship force put to sea; a land force headed into Kent. The war was short, with something of the character of a civil strife. Twenty-two years after the battle of Hastings, English sailors and English archers found themselves in front of Norman mariners and Norman knights. Old scores were to be paid. The end was everywhere the same. Such fleets as crept from Norman ports were overtaken, sunk, and captured; while the Norman fortresses, Tunbridge, Rochester, and Pevensey, were either stormed or starved into surrender. Some of the revolters made their peace in time; among them Mowbray, who was fighting for his uncle's place, not his uncle's opinion. Mutineers who still held out, were first beaten and then banished. Thousands of adventurers were put on board, and landed at either French or Norman ports. England was relieved, Hastings avenged.

On crossing over to the stronger side, Mowbray obtained a rich reward—his uncle's forfeited earldom. Entrenched at Bamborough, Tynemouth, and Alnwick castles, he maintained the habits of a petty prince. Spurning the dignity of an

English peer, his pride disdained to unbonnet in the presence of a king of Scots.

Rufus was fond of his Saxon hunting-lodge. Loving the chase, and given to private amours, Windsor suited the tyrant well. There was a forest for his stags, a lodging for his lemans, and a prison for his foes. What more could man like Rufus ask ?

Mowbray, though pardoned for his crime, was not forgiven. Rufus had to bide his time. Mowbray made a friend of Malcolm, king of Scots ; a man regarded by the English with respect, as being the husband of their favourite, Queen Margaret—a Saxon princess—afterwards to be canonized for her saintly life.

So long as Malcolm and Mowbray lived in friendship, Rufus was compelled to wait. At length a crime that turned all Scottish hearts against the border chief, enabled Rufus to assault his enemy, and bring him to this Norman keep.

Nettled by some proceedings in the South, Malcolm broke into the English dales, his two sons, Prince Edward and Prince Edgar, riding at his side. Marching towards Alnwick, they wasted the country on their flanks. Mowbray was at Bamborough castle, out of peril ; for his castle stood

on a lofty rock, a hundred and twenty feet above the tide, with walls and towers impervious to attack. But he was fretted by reports from the tenants of his wasted farms and fields ; and in a savage moment he resolved to take the Scottish invader in a trap.

One of Mowbray's nephews, known as Morel de Bamborough, was a godchild of the king of Scots ; and Malcolm, good and pious in his Northern fashion, treated this Morel as a son. Here lay a scoundrel's chance. Malcolm would believe what Morel said, so Morel de Bamborough was employed by Mowbray to entrap and murder the king of Scots.

Riding from Bamborough to Alnwick, Morel took possession of the keys, and when the Scots came up, he sent a message to his friend the king, to say that he was sick of living in his uncle Mowbray's service, that he wished to join the king, his godfather, and would come out secretly, give up the keys, and take up service with the Scots. Malcolm agreed to meet him. Morel named a place of rendezvous, and Malcolm, blinded by the joy of cheating Mowbray out of such a post as Alnwick, rode towards Morel with his eldest son by his side, and a small escort in his

wake. Morel knelt before him, offering him the keys of Alnwick on the point of his lance. Malcolm stooped to take them up, when Morel drove his point through the eyelet of his visor, straight into the monarch's brain. Malcolm fell dead. A fight ensued, in which his son, Prince Edward, lost his life.

Queen Margaret was lying on her couch, kissing a cross and saying her prayers, for she was sick almost to death, when Edgar, her second son, burst into the room. The two princesses, Edith and Mary, knelt beside their mother's bed. Margaret turned her eyes on the young prince as he came in :

'How fare the king and Edward?'

Edgar stood silent, and the ailing woman gasped:

'I know—I know. Yet, by this holy cross, I beg of thee to say the worst.'

Then Edgar answered her appeal, in the sad words,—'Both slain!'

The queen leant back on her couch and died.

By these three deaths, all laid at Mowbray's door, two nations were inflamed to fury, rancour, and remorse.

Rufus, then keeping his feast of Pentecost in

Windsor, sent for Mowbray to appear at court, and answer for his awful deed. Mowbray, shrinking from the consequences of his act, demanded hostages from his sovereign. Rufus declined to treat the criminal as a prince. Then Mowbray lowered his terms. Would Rufus pledge his word, that if he came to Windsor, he should be allowed to go back safely to his strongholds in the north? The king declined. Mowbray held out, and Rufus, after closing his Windsor festival, raised his flag, called in his troops, and marched into the north.

Alnwick, the scene of Morel's treachery, was the first place to be stormed. Morel fled to Bamborough on the king's approach, but many of Mowbray's knights and kinsfolk were at Alnwick, and these parties fell into the victor's hands. As rebels, having levied war against their prince, they were immured in jail till judgment should be meted out. Tynemouth was next assailed. A brother of Mowbray held command. The siege was long, the fighting stout; for every man within the walls perceived that, as a rebel, he had sinned beyond the hope of mercy, and he struck out with the arms of a despairing man.

But Rufus clung to that lonely rock, that rugged wall, till the defenders yielded up his prey.

At last he marched on Bamborough, where the criminal held out. Looking from his eyrie over Lindisfarne, the hermitage of St. Cuthbert, Mowbray felt confident of his walls and towers. And he was right. Though Rufus stood before the rock some time, he made no progress in the siege. No ground for battering could be taken up. No rush of pikes was possible up the scarped and covered rock. The slingers cast their stones in vain. All that the king could do, before he left the country, was to build a second castle, as a permanent camp, to starve and harass the besieged. This post he called Malvoisin (Bad neighbour); and leaving a strong force behind him, he marched with his main army into Wales.

Bamborough was won by stratagem.

A messenger was sent to Bamborough, with an offer to receive Mowbray and his men into Tynemouth, whence they might escape by sea. Calling his wife, Matilda, whom he had lately married, Mowbray made her captain of his stronghold, with his nephew Morel for her chief adviser, and set out with an array of horse and foot.

Malvoisin followed on his track, pursuing him all night. How had they learned his plans? At daybreak he was undeceived. Repelled from Tynemouth gates, he found his rear attacked by the royal troops. He fled. Accompanied by thirty horse, he gained a monastery by the sea. That holy place was now assailed. Five days he held his own; but his small troop was beaten down; and then the border ruffian, badly hurt, gave up his sword.

Captain Matilda stood at bay in Bamborough, defying the besiegers to assault her works, till Rufus found the means of crushing her heroic spirit. Mowbray was led before the castle gate, and when his wife appeared to parley, she was told that unless she yielded on the instant, he would have his eyes scooped out. At once, she dropt the keys.

Mowbray and Morel being carried to the south as prisoners, Morel turned king's evidence, and betrayed his friends on every side. These friends were Norman partisans, the enemies of a separate kingdom and an independent crown. Except the chief offender, they were banished from the realm.

Mowbray, on whom the odium of Malcolm's

murder and Margaret's death lay heavy, was conveyed to Windsor, and imprisoned in this Norman keep.

How long he pined in durance is unknown. Five years after he was brought to Windsor, he was still alive: for in that year he signed a bargain with Ralph Flambard, recently elected bishop of Durham. Twenty years later, he was still reported as alive; but no man, save his jailor and his sovereign, knew the actual facts.

Robert de Mowbray, earl of Northumbria, was forgotten in the Norman keep.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST KING'S HOUSE.

1107–1110.

TWELVE years after Mowbray's committal, Henry Beauclerc, younger brother of William Rufus, built a lodging for his queen and family at the foot of this Norman keep.

Beauclerc, a native of the country, spoke the English tongue, and trimmed his love-locks in the Saxon style. This fashion of the hair was then a visible mark of race. A Norman clipped his poll and shaved his chin; a Saxon grew his beard and twined his yellow curls about his neck. Reasons of state persuaded Beauclerc to adopt the manner of an English prince, to take the Confessor for his patron saint, and build his dwelling in the Saxon style. Rufus had been compelled to lean on English strength; but Beauclerc, from the outset of his reign, owed

everything—his crown, his freedom, nay, his life —to the support of English partisans. While his Norman lords were wrangling in the council-chamber, most of them railing at his falsehood and ambition, the citizens of Winchester, knowing their own mind, and trusting their own man, came out into the market-place and proclaimed him king. They wanted independence; Beauclerc offered them a separate and a sovereign state. They wanted to regain their ancient laws; Beauclerc consented to restore the codes of Edward the Confessor and Alfred the Great. They wanted peace between the older dynasty and the new; Beauclerc agreed to share his throne with a Saxon princess. In the face of Norman protests, he was carried to the throne; king by the grace of God and by election of the English folk.

A charter was proclaimed, a saint adopted; but of greater power than either saint or charter, was the choice of queen. A Saxon princess in the palace was a living law. The burghers held on fast to this condition: for an English bride implied an English heir, and in the time to come an English king. Even for that passing day, the best of saints and charters was a Saxon queen.

Beauclerc cast his eyes on Lady Edith, otherwise Madame Maud, a daughter of the murdered Malcolm and his Saxon queen, St. Margaret, and a little niece of Edward the Confessor. Malcolm had called his daughter Edith after Good Queen Edith, the most popular of female names; but Robert of Normandy, her godfather, had changed this name to Maud, after that of his own mother. She was known in London as Lady Edith, in Rouen as Madame Maud.

Young, beautiful, of saintly race, Lady Edith came to England after her father's murder and her mother's death, to seek a shelter with her aunt, Lady Christina, from the violence and treachery of Donald Bane. Her aunt was prioress of Wilton Abbey, and in that retreat Lady Edith passed some years. Standing too near the English throne for peace, Christina wished her to take the veil as a protection from the world. Living a cloistered life, the girl inclined that way. Her brother Edgar was expelled, his throne usurped, by Donald Bane. No home was left to her on earth, except a convent-cell. She donned the garment of a nun, and was about to make her vows, when startled by intelligence from court, that the young and popular king desired to have

her as his wife and queen. The shock was very great.

From Beauclerc as a man, she shrank with the timidity of a young and innocent girl. A prince of thirty, handsome in face and presence, he offered her his hand, his heart, his throne; yet the poor lady, driven from her home, and hiding in a convent-cell, put from her all these worldly snares. Her purity was offended by his life. A young man living in the court of Rufus, he had spent his days in riot, and was steeped in dissipation to his lips. He drank, he diced, he listened to immodest songs. Like all his Norman peers, he kept loose company, and proved unfaithful to the partners of his shame. Pure, if not ascetic in her ways, the Saxon princess heard of his amours with dismay. Had she been left to judge of him in reference only to herself, she might have worn the veil; but people came to her, old friends and new, who urged her to consent and to become their queen, not for her own sake, but her people's sake.

Anselm, the aged primate, prayed her to accept this trust—a call from Heaven—to save the king from sin, the country from despair. For her sake, Beauclerc was prepared to drive away his jongleurs

and courtesans, to purify his camp and court, to live with her a true and godly life. At length the votaress yielded to these prayers, making herself a sacrifice for the public good.

From that day, Lady Edith, quitting her convent for a throne, was hailed by rich and poor alike as Good Queen Maud.

A son was born to king and queen, in whose fair face men read a sign of future peace. This boy was christened William, after the invader; but the English people knew him only as the Ætheling, the noble youth—first prince of the blood, and heir-apparent to the throne. Next came a girl, called Ethel, Ethelric, or Adelaide, after the king's sister, Adelaide the Nun.

Such were the king and queen, such the young prince and princess, for whom a King's House—the first house built at Windsor—was erected on the royal hill, close by the foot of this Norman keep.

Before a trench was dug, Beauclerc fixed the plan and fashion of his house. Windsor lay nearer to his capital than the castles in which his father and his brother, when away from Westminster, had held their courts and kept their festivals. Chief of those castles were Winchester and Glou-

cester, near to which spread the great hunting-grounds of New Forest and Dean Forest. Winchester had been chosen as a halting-stage on the way to Rouen and Cherbourg ; but on England separating from the duchy, many of the reasons for keeping up a royal residence in Hampshire died a natural death. Gloucester had been chosen as a halting-stage on the march towards Chepstow and Shrewsbury ; but the peace which William Rufus had imposed on Wales, removed in some degree the need for a royal residence on the Severn. Free to think of England mainly, Beauclerc saw that neither Gloucester nor Winchester lay near enough to London for his principal residence. Windsor was retired, yet near. The ridge was high, the landscape fine. Beyond the ridge of hill, a chase extended several leagues. The manor vested in the Crown, and was connected in the minds of people with the ancestors of his Saxon queen.

Resolved on being an English prince, Beauclerc built himself an English house—a something new and strange in Norman eyes, the like of which had not been raised, as yet, by any of the intruding chiefs on English ground.

Before the Normans crossed the sea, England was an open country. Hardly any of the towns

were walled; hardly any of the houses armed and ditched. A fence, like that which guards a cottage in our own day, was the sole protection of a Saxon house. A Norman castle was a fortress rather than a dwelling-house—a squat and ugly pile, erected as a fortalice. Whether big or little, royal or baronial, the Norman castle was a donjon. York and Winchester, Gloucester and Norwich, were alike in aspect and design. No thought was given by their constructors to domestic life. The older Roman villas and the newer Saxon mansions had been open to the light and air of heaven. Until the Normans came, no one had built his dwelling on the model of a brigand's hold.

Bringing with them a harsher style, the Normans changed the house into a keep. The wooden fence, which had formerly parted the garden from adjacent field and forest, was replaced by walls of stone. A narrow passage, guarded by moat and bridge, turret and portcullis, led into the fortress. Not a single window pierced the stones. Such rays of light as stole into the place, crept in through slits which had been left for the bowman's shafts. An inmate found his lodgings either in the passages and cells, or in the sheds and pent-

houses under and within the wall—the baron and his family faring but little better than the prisoner in his vault. The rule was strictly held. Each manor was embattled for defence; and whether male or female, priest or warrior, every one requiring shelter had to come within the keep. A Syrian convent, in the Bedouin country, is not subject to a stricter rule.

Safe in the affection of his consort's people, Beauclerc took the step of building his house outside the Norman keep—near by the wall for safety, and connected with it by a bridge and by the Devil's tower, yet beyond the wall and ditch, and not within the strong defensive line. Beauclerc was the first to show this confidence in peace—the first to step outside his castle gate, and, like the English people, pitch his homestead in the open air.

Three years that house was in the masons' hands—a short time, seeing how solid were the towers, how vast the hall, how beautiful the chapel of their Saxon saint. When all was finished, Beauclerc came to Windsor with his queen. But their felicity was not to last. Before they came to see their English home, no little of the poetry of their bridal days was gone. Beauclerc, worn by

his public cares, was tired of sentiment. In earlier times, the king and queen's fondness for each other had provoked the merriment of a godless crew. Disliking the king's reforms, the warriors, wizards, and buffoons about his court, made fun of him and his domestic tastes, calling him Goody and his wife Godiva, and affecting to regard their sovereign as a milksop, pinned to a woman's petticoat, and singing lullabies at a baby's crib. At first he only smiled; but he had hardly strength enough to bear such jests; and his reply to taunts about his conjugal virtue was to plunge into war, and prove his manhood in the field. The fighting led him far from home, and steeped him once again in all the profligacy of a camp.

When he came back to Windsor, people hardly knew their king. He was a hero, with his praise on many tongues; but those who had seen him ride away, his Saxon locks about his ears, his yellow beard about his breast, stared in amazement at his shaven chin and closely-cropped head. He set out English, and he came back French.

The policy, so welcome to his English folk, of keeping free from the affairs of Normandy, was at an end. In one respect their hearts went with him, and rejoiced in his success. Beauclerc invaded

Normandy much as his father had invaded England. Forty years ago, the Norman power had broken down the English force, and seized this country; now, the English power had beaten down the Norman force, and seized that country. Tinchebray cancelled Hastings. England felt avenged.

Yet the Windsor people saw with jealousy that Beauclerc, in his absence, had become less English and more French. His chin was bare. What had he done with his abounding locks? A priest had clipped his beard. The thing was done in church—done as an act of penance, as an act of separation from the English race. The lords and knights who rode with him to Windsor had been also clipped and sheared. These men of war had cheek and chin as bare as those of the ladies waiting on their queen.

This change was followed by another change no less vexatious to the English queen.

During the festival, ambassadors came to Windsor from the emperor, with proposals for a match with Ethelric, the infant daughter of the king and queen. Heinrich, that emperor, was a man of forty-six, the Princess Ethelric a child of five. But Heinrich bore the greatest name in Europe, and the empire was the highest match on earth.

A marriage was arranged. Beauclerc consented to the emperor's terms, and out of compliment to his Continental followers he changed the English name of his child Ethelric to Maud—the girl so famous in the time to come as Empress Maud.

The rites by which baby Ethelric became Empress Maud were held at Windsor, in the chapel of St. Edward, near the new King's House.

CHAPTER IV.

LION HEART.

1190.

On the eve of quitting Windsor for the Holy Land (in which he failed to win the Sepulchre, but carried back to Windsor a patron saint), Richard of the Lion Heart divided his authority between two prelates — William de Longchamp, bishop of Ely, and Hugh de Puiset, bishop of Durham. The first deputy was to have his head-quarters in the Tower of London, the second deputy at Windsor Castle. Being men of peace, Lion Heart imagined that these two priests would check each other, serve him truly, and control the turbulence of his brother John.

When dreaming this boyish dream, Richard was thirty-three years old.

Lion Heart is the paradox of English kings. Excepting Alfred the Great and Henry of Agin-

court, no English hero holds his sovereignty of the mind so strongly as this rival of Saladin. The hero of all boys and girls, he is also the hero of most men and women; yet Lion Heart, even when measured by the standards of his time, had nearly every fault of a bad man, in addition to almost every vice of a bad king.

Lion Heart had neither love for country nor respect for law. When wanting money — and unluckily for his people, he was always wanting money — he grabbed it with the roughest hand. When force was useless, he had no objection to employing fraud. If force and fraud both failed him, he was ready to fall back on corruption; selling his canonries and bishoprics, his seats on the bench, his commands in the army, and his offices in the shires. But though his greed was fierce, his ferocity was fiercer still. A man of blood from his cradle upwards, he had never cared either for his own life, or the lives of other men. In personal morals he was lax, even for a man whose days were spent in war. Before he came to England for his coronation, he was nothing but a physical wreck.

His action as a prince had been in keeping with his genius as a man. Like his mother,

Elinor of Aquitaine, he had been unfaithful to the king, his father. Going over to the French, his father's enemies, he had broken that father's heart by his rebellion and ingratitude. A bad son is seldom either a good brother or a good husband. Richard made a bad brother, and a still worse husband. None of his brothers loved him; for the man was jealous, petulant, and rapacious in his treatment of his kith and kin. His consort, Berengaria of Navarre, suffered injuries which no woman less gentle and loving than herself could ever have condoned. Even in her early days of wedlock, he neglected her for a Cyprian captive. In later times he deserted her society in favour of the sweepings of his Norman camp.

No woman, save his lovely and wicked mother, ever kept much influence over Richard's heart.

French councillors accused him of the basest perfidies. Austria had reason to complain of him. Isaac of Cyprus found him an insatiable leech. Yet the worst vice of Richard was not greed, not perfidy, but pure ferocity—the passion of a beast of prey. He was guilty of a hundred cruel acts, but all his minor crimes were lost in the atrocious massacre of his hostages at Acre—

an offence against the human race, all but unparalleled in the history of human guilt.

Yet this bad man, bad king, bad husband, is the idol of young readers, and of men who live on song and romance.

The causes of Richard's popularity lie in his birth, his exploits, and his story-tellers. He was an English prince, born on the soil, and suckled by an English nurse. He could address his council and his army in their native tongue, and he was proud and boastful of his English birth. When Isaac, duke of Cyprus, played him false, refusing to observe the treaties he had signed, the king exclaimed, 'My God! what crazy lord is here, who thinks he can enchant us English thus!' And so he swore and fought—a thoroughgoing English prince.

In face and figure, he recalled the Saxon hero; for, like Alfred, he was tall and spare, with rosy cheeks, blue eyes, and flaxen curls. Was he not Malec Ric — the invincible leader — rival of Saladin himself? More still, he was a soldier of the Church, who gave up ease and splendour for his faith. He left the hunting-grounds of Windsor and the palaces of Westminster to others, while he marched through dust by land, and sailed

through storm at sea, in order to redeem the Holy Sepulchre. As other princes fight for provinces, Richard of the Lion Heart fought for Holy Church.

That Church was grateful to her champion, and her chroniclers glorified him, as the Arabian story-tellers magnified their Caliph. To a Church historian, Lion Heart was the prince of chivalry, the favourite of God.

In settling his affairs at Windsor, Richard was guided in his choice of ministers rather by his hope of raising money for his crusade than by any care for his deserted realm. He wanted funds and had a thousand offices for sale. Men who could raise money were the men he wanted. Every one who sought an office had to put his money down.

Even his two deputies had to pay for what they got. Bishop Puiset was charged two thousand marks for the county of Northumberland. Bishop Longchamp paid three thousand pounds of silver for the seals. Each had to buy his seat on the judicial bench. Puiset gave for his letters-patent as justiciar of the north a thousand marks. Longchamp gave the same for his letters-patent as justiciar of the south.

Windsor was converted by the king into an auction mart, where every grace, exemption, office, and employment, was put up for sale. When he took Puiset's marks for Northumberland, he talked of having wrought a miracle in transforming an old bishop into a young earl. When he was twitted with selling for money his palaces and fortresses, he roared: 'Man mine! I would sell London itself if I could find a purchaser!'

Hearing of the king's jest, the London citizens began to think of their ancient and suspended rights.

To keep the balance of power between his two justiciars, Longchamp and Puiset, he sent his mother, Queen Elinor, into Aquitaine, her province in the south of France. His brother John, enriched by several castles, such as Marlborough, Lancaster, and the Peak, agreed to go abroad, and stay in France three years, leaving the two bishops to reign at Windsor and the Tower. To his base-brother Geoffrey, the reputed son of Fair Rosamond, he promised the primacy of York, but only on condition that he went to live in Tours. All rivals in the council being gone, Longchamp, deputy and justiciar of the south, took up his residence in the Tower; while Puiset,

deputy and justiciar of the north, set up his banner on the Norman keep.

No pair of men in England showed so many contrasts as these rival deputies.

Hugh de Puiset was a son of Anak. Even in the north, where men are huge of build, he was regarded as a giant; but his height and mass of frame were softened by the graces of a figure which was lithe and plastic, even in advancing age. A face of nobler type was never set in English head. His eyes were bright, his lips red and ready. Exercise in riding and fowling had kept him spare. His manner had the unbought charm of a reigning prince. To such a man, Windsor seemed the natural home.

William de Longchamp, on the other part, was one of those freaks of Nature, which, by oddity of shape, so often attract the favour of despotic kings. He was a dwarf. His head and feet were out of all proportion to his size. He limped. His body had the twitch of a monkey. Shrivelled in his loins, he had a gibbous chest, a short neck, a receding chin, and a dog's upper lip and chaps. A meaner, a more odious face, was never seen.

In birth, the rival deputies were hardly less contrasted than in face and figure.

Puiset was descended from a princely race, and was himself of princely rank. His family waged war on their own account. In France and in Palestine they held their ground with kings. St. William of York was his cousin. A daughter of the Conqueror was his grandmother. King Stephen was his uncle; and he was first cousin to both Richard of England and Philippe of France. He stood in order of succession to the English throne.

Longchamp, on the other part, sprang from an obscure, if not a servile race. His father was the son of a runaway serf, who had found a hiding-place from his French master in one of the Norman villages. Hugh, the son of that serf, assumed the name of Longchamp, rose in life, and made acquaintance of great people. He had many sons beside the dwarf; and his misshapen son, unfit to carry on his line, was pushed into the church. He was too weak to lift a sword. The monks about the Norman camp and court regarded him rather as a menial than a man.

In offices and employments, the rival deputies were as different as in figure and in birth. Puiset, from his boyish days, had exercised important powers. At thirteen he was treasurer of the East

Riding, archdeacon of the East Riding, and archdeacon of Winchester. At twenty-five he was bishop of Durham, then the richest and most powerful see in England. He had held that Palatine see for thirty-seven years; a longer time than any other priest had ruled a diocese in either England, Italy, or France. In that long period he had seen six popes of Rome, and four emperors of New Rome. In many great transactions, both in England and abroad, Puiset had been concerned. He had crossed the path of Stephen. He had braved the wrath of Becket. Under Henry of Winchester he had commanded armies. No man in the kingdom had so much authority with the king of Scots and with the court of France.

Longchamp, on the other side, was a new man. He had no position in the Church. To bench and bar he was alike unknown. Seeing that he had learned no English, it is unlikely that he had dreamed of finding a career on English soil. His one great talent was finance. Like many other dwarfs, he was skilful in the working of metals. To the monks who wrote about him, he was known from his tricks of business as 'the second Jacob.' He had risen slowly, step by step. At first, he got

into the confidence of Geoffrey, the reputed son of Rosamond. Geoffrey was chancellor, and in Geoffrey's office Longchamp learned to make out suits and processes. But he was not content to be a clerk. He looked to get his master's place; and knowing how Richard hated Geoffrey, he transferred his services to the rising man. The prince soon found his value. Richard hankered after money, and the pigmy showed him how to fleece his people. Patting his 'second Jacob' on the back, Richard called him *his* chancellor, as Geoffrey was his father's chancellor. Who but the artful pigmy could supply the treasury of that lavish prince?

Yet Longchamp held no post till he arrived in London. Richard took the seals from his brother Geoffrey, and bestowed them on that brother's former clerk. Treachery was rewarded, and corruption crowned. Richard got his load of silver, and the buyer got possession of the seals.

These seals were not enough. Longchamp needed rank. How could the king expect his cousin Puiset to receive this minion as an equal? Longchamp was not a baron of the realm. The seals conferred no precedence, and Richard shrank from such an outrage on his barons as making

Longchamp a belted earl. The Church was open, and his barons were not jealous of the spiritual peers. As bishop of Ely, Longchamp might claim a nominal equality with Puiset, bishop of Durham. Longchamp was promoted to that see.

Yet Richard had barely crossed the Channel on his way towards Palestine before the strife broke out—the Tower and Windsor Castle were at war.

CHAPTER V.

KINGLESS WINDSOR.

1190.

Envy is the vice of all misshapen creatures, and the low-born pigmy at the Tower had many things to envy in his rival at the Norman keep. Not to mention Puiset's princely birth and long experience of affairs, Longchamp was jealous of his standing in the northern shires, his double peerage, and his residence on the royal hill. He was the only prelate in the Church who could vote with churchmen as a priest, with laymen as an earl. While Longchamp had no jurisdiction in Yorkshire, Puiset claimed to have jurisdiction in Middlesex. Still more annoying was his presence on the Thames. Windsor was less than two hours' ride from Westminster. Puiset at Windsor Castle was a menace to the Tower. Windsor was known as the King's House. A man who kept

his court at Windsor Castle, even though he were not related to the reigning line, must needs appear the truest image of an absent king. Longchamp resolved to drive his enemy from that vantage-ground, and raise his own banner on the Norman keep.

Longchamp began the conflict by disputing the co-deputy's jurisdiction in the southern shires, of which his mastery of Windsor Castle was the visible sign and proof. Why should the justiciar of the northern counties occupy a seat in the southern council? Longchamp had no voice beyond the Trent. Why should Puiset have a voice in Westminster? Longchamp held no castles in the north. Why should his colleague have a stronghold on the Thames?

His first move was to question Puiset's right to sit in the Exchequer with the other justices. A royal deputy in the south, Longchamp had a leading voice in the Exchequer Chamber, and he caused his enemy to be excluded from that court. Puiset protested, and appealed from Longchamp's creatures to the king. Emboldened by success, Longchamp contested his right to the county of Northumberland, though the king had put the earl's belt round his waist with his own hands.

Puiset again appealed. Meantime he was driven from the Exchequer, and his standing as an earl denied.

Each party crossed the sea to Normandy, where he was well received by Richard, but with a difference in the style. Puiset was greeted like a kinsman, Longchamp like a secret agent. One rode out hunting with the king, the other crept into his private cabinet. Richard wanted money, and his chancellor was the only man who understood the Jews, and felt no scruples as to plundering monks. But for this quality in Longchamp, Richard might have made his popular and experienced minister, Walter de Coutance, archbishop of Rouen, deputy of the south. Coutance had lived in England, first as archdeacon of Oxford, afterwards as bishop of Lincoln. While in England he had shown great talents, and obtained a wide repute. The finest satirical poems of his century were inscribed to him by John de Hauteville. But the time for sending Coutance into England had not yet arrived. Money being wanted, Longchamp was the only man.

How could the king assure his financial deputy the higher place? As bishops, the two men were equals; but a bishop of Durham had precedence

over a bishop of Ely. Legatine letters would reverse this order. Why not seek in Rome for legatine powers ? Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury, was in Richard's camp ; while Geoffrey, archbishop-elect of York, lay under promise to remain at Tours. Clement, in the absence of these primates, might be asked to make Longchamp legate. Richard wrote to the pontiff, and his practical deputy sent a secretary to the papal court with a bag containing fifteen hundred marks. Longchamp, having paid his coin, assumed the part of legate without waiting for the formal briefs.

The secular questions were less easy to arrange. On all sides Puiset was a dangerous man to slight. A native of the soil, and speaking English like his neighbours—a bold rider, a keen sportsman, an excellent sailor—he was popular with all classes in the north. Durham was hardly more devoted to him than Yorkshire. York owed him many things ; among the rest, her local saint, William of York. William, king of Scots, was much attached to him, and nearly all the border fortresses were in his hands. To quarrel, then, with Puiset was to court disorders, not in Durham only, but in every county to the north of Trent. And there was Philippe to consider. Philippe was a partner

in the crusade; and an injury done to his cousin Puiset might disturb, and even defeat, that enterprise.

While Richard, eager to set out, was yet unable to decide between his agent and his cousin, news came in from York which gave his money-raising minister a chance of driving the rival deputy from his Norman keep.

The Jews of York were then a rich and growing colony, with a school of learning equal in repute to that of Orleans, perhaps to that of Saragoza. Much of the banking business of the north was in their hands. Many of the Yorkshire gentry owed them money, and not a little monastic plate was pledged to them. They were a harmless, clever, and pacific people, paying their tithes and taxes, and desiring nothing from the state except the favour of being left alone.

Before the king left Windsor on his crusade, two of this colony, Baruch and Jossen, had been sent to London, as a deputation. Baruch was beaten by a mob; who having hurt him badly, offered him his choice between the gallows and the cross. To save his life, he had chosen the cross. Richard, hearing of his conversion, had sent for him, and in the presence of Baldwin

and other prelates, asked him if he really believed that Christ was the Messiah. Baruch had answered No. He had kissed the cross in order to escape from his pursuers, and no more. Richard, turning to his primate, had asked what punishment should be meted out to the apostate? With a wisdom rare in the crusading times, archbishop Baldwin had replied, 'None. If he will not be a man of God, let him be a man of Satan.'

Baruch died within a week; and Jossen turned with a sad heart towards York, where he had left his wife Anna and his five little ones. As he wended homeward, risings against the Jews broke out in other towns—in Norwich, Stamford, Lynn, and Lincoln. Reaching York, he told his tale of Baruch's death, and of the persecutions springing up. The citizens of York, freed from the presence of their justiciar, excited by their priests, and urged on by their hope of plunder, rose on the Jewish colony, broke into their stores and dwellings, and, on meeting with resistance, fired the thatch and slew the inmates, sparing neither age nor sex. Some of the Jews were massacred by men who owed them money, others by fanatics who believed that they had sacrificed stolen boys in their hellish rites.

At first these Jews found friends among the laymen. While a priest was howling through the city, 'Down with the enemies of Christ!' Marshal, sheriff of the county, offered them an asylum in the king's castle. Fifteen hundred Jews, led by Jossen and their chief rabbi, moved into the fort, of which one wing or tower was given to them. Their bonds and mortgages were in the minster, in the strong room of the sacred edifice. The storm seemed blowing over, when a sudden panic seized the Jews. A rumour got abroad that Marshal was connected with their enemies in the streets. In dread of treachery, they closed their gate. Surprised at being thrust from his own castle, the governor summoned the Jews inside to open that gate. They answered with a shower of stones. A cry was raised, and crowds soon gathered round the spot; but such a tower as that of York was hardly to be captured by a mob. The shire was raised. Marshal called out the Percies, Malleboises, Darrels, and other Yorkshire knights, who rode into the city with their tenants, and began a siege in form. One day, the fanatical priest was killed. Taking the sacrament, and putting on his surplice, he had rushed to the wall, crying out to the assailants, 'Kill

them! Kill the enemies of Christ!' A Jew, standing on the battlement, rolled off a stone, which fell on him, crushing him to death. The fight growing hot, Jossen proposed to pay a sum of money as ransom for their lives. His money was refused. Seeing no opening for escape, Jossen convened a council of despair, in which the old rabbi rose, and urged his brethren to imitate the Hebrews who had made the name of Masada famous in their ancient days:

'Men of Israel! the God of our fathers bids us die for His law. Let us surrender our lives to Him.'

Jossen and a large majority agreed to die. They burnt their perishable goods; they threw their gold and silver into the castle drains; they set the tower on fire, and as the flames swirled up, they cut the throats of wife and child, and then their own. Jossen and the rabbi were the last to die. With his own hand, Jossen strangled his wife, Anna, and his five children. Then he bared his throat to the rabbi, who despatched his friend, and then slew himself.

The minority lifted up the dead bodies, and hurled them over the ramparts, on to the heads of the besieging force. This done, they burnt

their clothes, hid their money in the sinks and drains, and threw themselves into the flames. A few, less steadfast than their brethren, rushed to the walls, crying out for mercy, and proposing to accept the cross. Their lives were promised them; but when they came into the street, the mob set on them, and they perished to a man.

Then Percy, Mallebois, Darrel, and their fellows, marched to the minster, forced the custodian to give up bonds and mortgages, and made a bonfire of these documents on the minster floor.

The news of these disorders in Puiset's capital offered Longchamp an excuse for trespassing on his rival's ground.

Neither Richard nor his chancellor cared one farthing for the Jews. Though robbery and massacre were raging in other cities, neither king nor chancellor had ever raised his voice, and in some quarters they were each suspected of a secret under-plotting with the mob. In many places they were making money by the sale of licenses and protections. But in these events at York, the deputy saw an opening for intrusion on the province of his colleague and adversary. York stood beyond the Trent. If Puiset were at home, the task of punishing the guilty would devolve

on him; if Longchamp were at home and Puiset absent, he might act alone.

To the king, Longchamp could promise fines, escheats, and ransoms without end. The Jews were rich, and many of their murderers were rich. Longchamp knew all the tricks of which advantage could be taken of events like those in York. But he must go alone and by the swiftest route; while Puiset must be kept in Rouen near the king, distracted by his great appeal.

CHAPTER VI.

WINDSOR WON.

1190.

While Puiset was detained in Rouen near the king, apparently in honour, Longchamp crossed the sea, and picking up men from fort and fortalice as he rode up north, he crossed the Trent with a great army under the command of his brothers, Osbert and Henry. As the king's deputy, bearing the king's commission, he took possession of Tickhill and other fortresses. With no one to oppose his march, he entered York, and drew the government into his hands. First, he dismissed the governor, and deposed the sheriff. Having filled the castle with his troops, he seized a hundred of the richest citizens as hostages for the public peace. Osbert, his brother, was appointed sheriff of Yorkshire. Longchamp assumed the rank, not only of justiciar, but of papal legate.

But the jealousy of the Yorkshire clergy was excited. Dean and canons required to see his letters-patent. He had none to show. When they declined to take his word, he closed the minster, suspended the whole chapter, and interdicted divine service.

Having borne down every one by violence, he began to think of Richard and his need. Great fines were levied on the citizens, and the hundred hostages were sent to Northampton castle, south of Trent, as a security, not only for these fines, but very much beside these fines. The lands of Percy, Mallebois, and other kinsmen of his rival, were escheated to the crown. The king was made heir-general of the murdered Jews. All that remained to them was gathered up and sent to Normandy. Their ledgers were inspected, and their debtors found. All bonds and pledges due to them were exacted on the king's behalf. Not a penny of their property was restored to the kinsfolk of the murdered Jews.

On hearing of these acts of violence, miscalled acts of justice, Puiset begged the king's leave to cross the Channel and resume the government of his province. The deed being done, the lands secured, Richard allowed his cousin to depart.

Puiset carried letters from the king, which he imagined to be fair and full, settling the disputed points, and giving him such power as he required both south and north of the dividing line. At Blythe the rivals met again. Blythe lay below the Trent, and Longchamp was within his lines. Yet Puiset, confident of his powers, was proud and mettlesome, not veiling his contempt for the poor mannikin who had been playing him all these tricks at York. The small man held his tongue and listened. He was only acting for the public good. He had no thought of going beyond the king's command. He only wished to learn the royal will that he might hasten to obey. Puiset produced his letters, and his rival read them through with care. Longchamp seemed content, and offered to meet his rival that day week, and settle their dispute. To ease suspicion, he appointed Tickhill, one of the Yorkshire castles, as the place of parley. Tickhill was in Puiset's province; and the northern deputy supposed it in his power. They parted company at Blythe: one soft of face and meek of tongue, the other swollen with pride and hot with rage. No fear of treachery on the part of Longchamp was in Puiset's mind.

What could that pigmy do against this son of Saul?

Attended by an escort of his servants, Puiset rode to Tickhill. Longchamp was already on the spot, with Odo de Daiville and Pierre de Bovencourt, his trusty officers, in command of every wall and tower. Invited to come in, Puiset entered boldly, leaving his men outside the gates, not dreaming of the lengths to which his enemy might go. As soon as he was in the chamber, he became aware that he had fallen into a trap. Longchamp snarled at him:

'When we met the last time you were loud, and I was silent. It is now my turn to speak.'

Pulling out a letter, Longchamp read a new commission from his majesty, later in date than that of Puiset, giving him the fullest powers to act as the king's lieutenant, not in one part of the kingdom only, but in every part alike. There seemed no limit to his powers.

Unable to dispute the king's signature, Puiset could only think of an appeal; but he was not allowed to leave the stronghold on such easy terms. He was a prisoner in his rival's hands. Odo and Pierre were ready for their duty. Puiset's escort, left before the gates, was pushed

aside. For who could fight against the king and the king's deputy ? Puiset was told that he must give up Windsor Castle, and the other castles he had held as deputy. When he had given them up, he might retire to some religious house. As he objected to such treatment, Longchamp glared and stormed at him :

'By the king's life, you shall not stir till you have given me hostages for the delivery of all the fortresses you hold.'

Appeal to his sacred calling was as useless with a man like Longchamp as appeals to the loyalty of men like Pierre and Odo. Longchamp only sneered :

'I take you prisoner as a chancellor takes a chancellor, not as a bishop takes a bishop.'

In the absence of his legatine letters, Longchamp had to act with some reserve ; but he was not the man to let his enemy slip his chain. Surrounding Puiset with a guard, he marched from Tickhill, crossed the Trent into his own domain, and brought his captive on to Westminster. As Puiset still refused to give up Windsor Castle, Longchamp cast him into prison, where privation soon began to tell on his reluctant spirit. Longchamp's legatine powers arrived, and Puiset could

no longer brave him in the church, and threaten him with the pontiff's wrath. Then his big heart gave way. To gain his liberty he yielded Windsor Castle, with the custody of Windsor Forest and the shrievalty of Berkshire.

Longchamp rode to Windsor, where he pulled down Puiset's flag, assumed the Constable's staff, and took possession of the Norman keep. His flag now floated on the royal hill. Seated in the King's House as deputy and constable, Longchamp had the kingdom at his feet.

Puiset was not only driven from the King's House and the Norman keep, but stript of all his offices and patents. His earldom of Northumberland was withdrawn, and Newcastle, the stronghold of his county, occupied by Longchamp's men. His manor of Sadberge was escheated to the crown. Even his freedom as a bishop was abridged. A small monastic building stood at Howden, on the river Ouse, and to that humble cloister the justiciar's freedom was confined. The cousin of two kings was virtually imprisoned in a hermit's cell.

On Puiset's fall, Longchamp's authority was all but absolute. Most of the men who might oppose him were away from England. John, the

king's brother, was in France, bound by an oath to wait there till the king's return. Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury, was in Richard's camp. Geoffrey, archbishop elect of York, was in Touraine. Ranulph, earl of Chester, and Robert, earl of Leicester, had taken up the cross. As papal legate, Longchamp ruled the Church; as chancellor he ruled the law courts; and as deputy he summoned and dismissed the council at his will. Longchamp had all the forces of the country—those within the city walls excepted—in his hands. He ruled at Windsor Castle, while his creature, Puintal, held the Tower. Osbert, his brother, ruled in York, and in the line of border strongholds. Richenda, his sister (wife of Mathew de Cleres), held Dover. Oxford, Nottingham, Tickhill, and Lincoln, were in faithful hands.

To gain a firmer hold on London, with command of the western outlets—Newgate and Ludgate—Longchamp got possession of the strong castle known as the King's Prison, afterwards better known as the Fleet Prison.

Richard wanted money, and his deputy had to find supplies. Riding through the shires, attended by a thousand knights and clerks, the

knights in mail, the clerks with money-bags, Longchamp tithed and taxed, according to his mood. His chamber was a mart, where every royal grace was bought and sold. As chancellor, he sold decrees in equity; as deputy, he sold patents from the council-board. No scruples ever stayed his pen. To William de Aubigny he sold the earldom of Arundel for three thousand marks. To Geoffrey Fitz-Piers he sold the earldom of Essex for three thousand marks. Hearing that Baldwin, the primate, was unwell, he rode down to Canterbury, and by money, stolen from other people, made himself a party in the cloister. With the king's assistance, he was certain of succeeding to the primacy. As primate, he could raise more money for the king than he could do when chancellor and bishop, and the only thought of Richard, in his choice of servants, was the money they might raise.

But Puiset's fall brought other enemies into the field. Breaking through all his oaths, John crossed the Channel, and returned to England. Elinor, queen-mother and nominal regent, undertook to answer for his breach of faith.

A man of easy manner and conceding mood, John had already troops of friends. He strove, and

not in vain, to prove that he was English-born and English-bred. He talked of Saxon times and Saxon liberties, by the hour. In every town of England friends rose up for him against the foreign deputy whose flag now floated on the Norman keep. If John was faithless and corrupt, the burghers had not found him out. They knew him as a liberal prince, who spoke of their lost franchise in a language which had not been heard at court since the reign of Good Queen Maud. Of course, the man was aiming at the crown. Well, so it was in Beauclerc's days. What cared these citizens for the prince's secret motives? Kings who yielded them the largest share of freedom were the best of kings.

In secular matters, John was soon a match for the pigmy deputy at Windsor; but as bishop and legate, Longchamp was master in the spiritual sphere. So Elinor made a second move. Geoffrey, archbishop-elect of York, was still at Tours, according to his promise. Elinor hated Geoffrey, but she hated Longchamp more than she hated her husband's illegitimate son. Henry's paramour being gone, the fair woman could trouble her no more, while Longchamp was the rival and the enemy of her favourite child. All enemies of Longchamp were

become her friends. Geoffrey and John had not been cordial with each other, yet as sons of the same father she supposed they might combine their forces for a common object. An archbishop, who was also Richard's brother, might easily be made a thorn in Longchamp's side.

Resolved that Geoffrey should return to England, as a counterpoise to the deputy-legate, Elinor took the business on herself. Going straight to Richard's camp, she made him sign a warrant for the archbishop-elect to assume his duties. Longchamp interposed. As papal legate, he refused to grant Geoffrey consecration. Elinor went to Clement, and obtained the pall. An archbishop of Tours performed the rite, and Geoffrey, on the day of his consecration, started for the English coast.

CHAPTER VII.

GEOFFREY PLANTAGENET.

1190–1.

THREE women barred the new archbishop's way: Richenda de Cleres (Longchamp's sister), and the two countesses of Flanders and Boulogne.

Richenda de Cleres was governess of Dover, Mathew, her husband, being the nominal constable of the port and castle. Living at Dover, she was in correspondence with the countesses of Flanders and Boulogne, whose husbands were away in Palestine. At her request, the countesses consented to oppose the primate's passage across the straits.

Arrived at Guisnes, Geoffrey tried to hire a boat from the Flemish mariners. Not a skipper in the port would take his money. Why? They had received an order from their liege lady, Matilda, countess of Flanders. In accordance with the

wishes of Richenda, she refused to let him hire a boat. Annoyed at this delay, Geoffrey rode to Witsand, in the neighbouring county of Boulogne. There, too, the mariners returned his money. Why? The Countess of Boulogne refused to help him over to his country. Orders from Windsor overcame the awe inspired by the archbishop's rank and character. But after some delays, he heard that though the countess, out of deference to the English deputy, had stayed his passage, she had no objection to her people carrying his baggage and his retinue across, provided they were bound to land at Dover and no other port.

Not fearing treachery, Geoffrey put his goods and men on board. On Thursday they set sail. Next day he found an English smack, the crew of which agreed to carry him across. At night-fall he embarked, and in the early morning lay off Dover. Soon a boat came off to meet him, with a message from the castle. His effects had all been seized the previous day. The smack was taken under charge, and Geoffrey being pointed out by the skipper, he was made a prisoner to the king. On asking why, and in whose name, he was informed that he must go up to the castle and

receive an answer to his questions from Madame de Cleres, sister to the king's deputy.

Geoffrey held his peace until he stept on shore.

What followed on his landing was a drama going far beyond the dreams of Elinor and the hopes of John.

Leaping on the beach, and finding a horse held ready to convey him up the Castle hill, Geoffrey, a swift and daring rider, as became his Yorkshire training, sprang astride the horse, and while the officers stood staring at his quickness, dashed away towards the Folkestone road. At Folkestone he had friends; Simon de Avranches, lord of Folkestone, being his intimate partisan. But he was not to reach that town. A cry being raised that Geoffrey was escaping from arrest, pursuit set in. One of Richenda's officers drew up with him, and getting close abreast on the right flank, put out his hand to clutch the archbishop's rein. Geoffrey in the saddle was at home. Just as the two horses grazed each other in their headlong race, he drew his boot from the stirrup, and struck his enemy's horse a blow in the left ribs. Smarting from the steel rowel, the horse shied off, and his baffled rider had to drop the archbishop's rein.

Geoffrey was freed, but other officers were close behind, men with a perfect knowledge of the downs. Unable to clear them all, he turned into the courtyard of St. Martin's priory, and demanded an asylum from the monks. Dismounting from his horse, he strode into the chapel, where the lesson of the day was being read. The words that reached him sounded like a prophecy :

'He that troubleth you shall have his judgment. . . . I would they were even cut off, that troubleth you.'

Geoffrey was comforted, but he had little time for words. Richenda's men demanded him as a fugitive from justice. He declined to quit the holy place. A line of troops drew round the priory, and Geoffrey, even while the mass was being sung, became a virtual captive in their hands.

When mass was over, Geoffrey sent a monk to the castle, to inquire whether Richenda was aware of what her men were doing in her name. She answered curtly that she was her brother's deputy, that she was acting on his orders, and that she would execute them word for word. Reminded that the priory was sacred, and the person of an archbishop also sacred, she replied that others were

the judges of such matters. She was carrying out her brother's orders; and to put an end to idle speech, she added that should the deputy send her word to burn Dover castle, or even the city of London, she should instantly obey.

All night her men lay round the priory walls. At early mass on Sunday morning, Geoffrey launched an excommunication against their mistress. In reply she sent him word, that he must either swear an oath of fealty to King Richard and his deputy, or go on board his vessel and recross the sea. Geoffrey declined. He had already sworn fidelity to the king, his brother, and he had no need to swear that oath again. As to his brother's deputy, all that he could give him was the word due to a traitor to his prince.

Material force was at Richenda's bidding, and, uncurbed by scruple, she gave orders to employ material force. Her men pressed through the gates, into the corridors of the chapel. There they saw the archbishop, seated on his throne before the altar, wearing his alb and stole, and holding in his hand a golden cross. That picture smote them. Men of Kent, these soldiers of the deputy's sister were adorers of St. Thomas. Geoffrey was a second Becket, clinging like that martyr to his

altar-steps. Could they, at any woman's call, renew the crime which had so lately plunged the kingdom into an abyss of shame?

Sunday wore out. Late in the evening, Mathew de Cleres arrived at the priory. Absent from Dover when the primate landed, he was free to say that he was pained and shocked by what had happened. But he had nothing to propose; he came to argue, in the hope of getting Geoffrey to submit. Submit to Longchamp! Geoffrey denounced the deputy as a traitor to the king. Mathew was soft and smooth, but he was under orders; and he hinted that, unless the primate listened to reason, he must do his duty. Geoffrey defied him and his excommunicated wife to do their worst.

Madame Richenda sent the archbishop's horses as a present to her brother, who had now left Windsor for Norwich, with reports of all that she had done. That pigmy was delighted with her vigour, and believed that she had turned the storm aside!

As Monday passed away without result, except a darkening mood among the townsmen, she sent her servants, Aubrey Marney, an Essex knight, and Alexander Puintal, a connexion of her own,

into the priory, with orders to arrest the primate, and bring him to the Castle hill. They found him seated at the altar, in his high pontificals, and bearing in his hand the golden cross. Marney and Puintal were prepared to act, but could not yet persuade their men to violate the sanctuary. Some stood apart, eyeing the archbishop; others turned their backs on him, in shame and sorrow; many flung themselves on the ground to sob and pray. Yet hour by hour the troops were pressed in, closer and closer to the archbishop's throne, lessening the distance and respect, and bringing on the chances of a rush.

On Tuesday morning, Auberville and other Kentish knights came in, and urged the primate to submit. These persons knew Richenda's temper, and they feared the stain of a new murder on their shire. But Geoffrey stood like rock. All day he sat before the altar, waving his cross aloft.

'I am the archbishop,' he announced.

'That is not our affair,' the officers of Richenda answered him. 'Whether you are an archbishop or not, we don't know: but you are Geoffrey, son of King Henry by a strange woman. If

you are not come into the kingdom as a traitor, show us your letters from the king.'

'I am no traitor; but I shall not give my letters to your hands.'

On Wednesday the onset came. Marney and Puintal were in church, when a wild movement swept along the ranks. Soldiers threw themselves on the ground, and beat their breasts, and cried out to St. Martin, like offenders in despair of grace. Then, having eased their consciences, they rose, rushed on the throne, and seizing the archbishop by his arms and neck, began to drag him towards the chapel door. He struck out lustily with his golden cross. Some feigned, some fell beneath his blows; but they were many, he was only one. They beat him to the ground; they snatched away his cross; they bruised his head against the stones; then, grasping him by the arms and feet, they bore him out into the yard.

In proud and solemn wrath, the archbishop marked these tools of the excommunicated woman with his finger, and denounced them as the enemies of Christ. In him they had profaned the priesthood; in St. Martin's priory they warred against

the heavenly powers. Henceforth they were accursed of holy Church.

A horse was standing ready in the yard; but he refused to mount. That beast belonged to a person who was excommunicate. If he were forced along, he must submit to violence; leaving the men who used that violence to answer for their deeds to God and holy Church. Much autumn rain had fallen, and the roads were deep in mire. The streets through which he had to pass between the priory and the castle hill, were lined with townfolk who seemed horrified by the scene. 'O knaves!' these townfolk cried aloud, 'why are you driving him? What evil has he done? Let him alone. He is a priest and an archbishop. He is the son of a king, the brother of a king. Let him alone!'

Mathew, less passionate than his wife, was conscious that the curses now heard in Dover would soon be ringing through the streets of London, and of every city in the realm. He tried to save himself. Meeting his prisoner at the castle gates, he fell on his knees before him, burst into a flood of tears, and would not rise till the archbishop deigned to pardon him his share in the offence. Yet in the council-room, the stronger spirit of his

wife prevailed. Richenda knew her brother's purpose, and the man who stood before her as a prisoner had pronounced her excommunicate. Her heart was sore, her temper harsh. Once more, and for the last time, she required the primate to either swear the oath or go on board his smack. On his refusal, she cast him into one of the prison vaults; a vault without a fire, without a drop of water, and without a crust of bread.

As night came on, a gale sprang up at sea, which blew into the port and town; but seemed, according to the feelings of the place, to spend a sterner passion on the castle walls. Some of the battlements were broken through, and the great down from which they sprang, seemed shaken by the storm. But she resisted omens and appeals. Geoffrey, a priest, could take no food from excommunicated hands. She bade him send for food into the town, and pay for what he wanted like an ordinary man.

For eight days he was kept a prisoner in his damp and empty cell; but Madame de Cleres, in her week of triumph, heaped more coals of fire on her brother's head than any man could bear and live.

When news of the events in Dover reached the capital, London was roused by an emotion which had not been equalled since the black and unforgotten day of Becket's martyrdom. Fitz-Neale, the popular bishop, took his horse and rode to Norwich, where the deputy still lodged indulging in his fancy that Richenda's firmness had turned the storm aside! Dover lay in the province of Canterbury; and while the archbishop was away in Palestine, Fitz-Neale, as bishop of London, was the primate's deputy.

Longchamp was no longer legate. Clement was dead, and with him all his legatine powers were gone. Fitz-Neale was now the foremost prelate in the Church.

Fitz-Neale demanded Geoffrey at the deputy's hands. In vain the mannikin protested and explained. He had not done this deed; he bitterly regretted what had happened; he had only given an order that the primate, on his landing, should be asked to swear the usual oaths. Fitz-Neale would hear no protest, and accept no compromise. An order must be sent that night. The archbishop must be instantly set free.

Longchamp, unable to resist, gave way to force, aware that his clerical monitor was speak-

ing with the weight of England at his back. But he was conscious of the change in his position; and having sent his order to Richenda, he hurried back to Windsor Castle, as the centre and the symbol of his power.

CHAPTER VIII.

WINDSOR LOST.

1191.

Quitting Dover, in the clothes which he had worn during his imprisonment, the primate rode to Canterbury, while his adversary was unfurling his flag on the Norman keep.

Near London, Geoffrey was met by a great procession, and conducted to St. Paul's. Rayner, leader of the guildmen, worked with Bishop Fitz-Neale, the clergy, and the monks. Geoffrey, for the moment, was a hero in the State and in the Church. A man of English birth, born of an English mother, and a master of the English tongue, he was opposing a foreign adventurer, obscure in birth, deformed in person, and contemptuous of the natives whom he peeled and sheared. Never, since the news of Becket's murder, had the capital been so excited as by

Geoffrey's entrance. On his coming to St. Paul's, the great bell rang the citizens to arms. The bishop's cross was raised; the great fraternities came out with flags and relics; and the outraged primate was received with shouts of joy and welcome, as a living saint—so far happier than St. Thomas, that he had been snatched by heaven from the assassins' hands.

Longchamp's trouble with this adversary gave John his chance. Longchamp remained at Windsor, as a place of greater safety than the Tower. John was at Marlborough, with a fast-increasing train of bishops, lords, and knights. Coutance, archbishop of Rouen, joined the prince, bringing with him a sealed commission from the absent king. Longchamp was anxious to know the contents of that sealed document, but Coutance kept his secret to himself. Words, as he felt, were useless, till a blow had been delivered. Till the Tower and Windsor Castle were wrested from him, Longchamp could hardly be expected to resign his powers.

Entrenched at Windsor, in the Norman keep, the clerical dwarf imagined he could crush his enemies in detail. Geoffrey and his partisans in London stood, he thought, between two fires—

the loyal garrisons of Windsor and the Tower. John and his followers at Marlborough stood, he also thought, between two fires—the loyal garrisons of Windsor and Oxford. In his vanity, he summoned Geoffrey to appear before the council and explain his presence on the English soil. He warned the bishops who were on their way to Marlborough of his anger, and he ordered them to turn their faces towards their own cathedral towns. John he denounced as guilty of high treason, and commanded every man in the king's service to pursue the prince, hunting him down, and treating him as a public enemy. But he was soon aware that words were words, and nothing else. Geoffrey paid no heed to his commands.

Godfrey of Winchester and Hugh of Coventry appeared at Marlborough in the camp of John. Instead of falling back, the prince advanced to Oxford, which he occupied without a blow. Here, Hugh of Lincoln, the most saintly person in the Church, came in, and the whole party moved on Reading, within easy striking reach of Windsor. Geoffrey now set out in quest of John. Fitz-Neale, in his character of councillor, came to Windsor Castle, where his presence acted as a check on Longchamp.

As soon as Geoffrey reached Reading, messengers were sent from John to Windsor summoning the deputy to a conference on the river Lodden. To receive that message was a blow. If Longchamp obeyed that summons, he was virtually deposed. A lord of Windsor taking orders from a master of Reading was against all right and usage. Yet the power to hurl defiance at his enemy was gone. The capital was against him; all the justices were against him. Fitz-Neale advised him to submit. Norfolk and Warren, who remained near him as councillors, gave the same advice. Arundel, the only friend on whom he counted, urged him to accept that summons, as the only chance now left to him of securing terms.

On Saturday—a day of evil augury—Longchamp rode out from Windsor, with a heart as easily shaken as the autumn leaves. Norfolk and Warren tried to put some stiffness in his joints, but all their bantering was in vain. Were not these councillors, he asked himself uneasily, as false to him as Fitz-Neale? A dwarf in size, he would be easy to arrest; unable to lay about him, as Geoffrey had fenced and battered in the priory. When he had ridden four miles from Windsor, he pulled up. He felt unwell, he

said; he could not ride another mile. Norfolk, Warren, and Fitz-Neale, might prick on to the place of conference. He would wait for them in the country lane; wait for them among the falling leaves.

No words of either Norfolk or Fitz-Neale could rouse his spirit; the dwarf would ride no farther; and at length the three councillors left him with his retinue of servants in the Windsor lane.

Out in the open field, beside the winding river, John and his party met the bishop of London and his secular colleagues. Clearing a space, the heralds called for silence. Geoffrey got up and told the story of his wrongs. He had his brother's leave, he said, to come into his diocese; he had received his pall from Rome; yet, when he landed on the coast, he was arrested by the deputy's sister, and on gaining a refuge in a church, had been assailed by her retainers, who had dragged him from the altar-steps, ill-used him in the priory, and driven him, like a malefactor, through the public streets. He closed his speech with a demand for justice on the enemies of God.

Hugh of Coventry explained to the unlettered lords and knights the clerical and legal points. Puiset's case was stated; but as Geoffrey was the

idol of the day, his injuries at Dover were adapted as the grounds of Longchamp's fall. Coutance put a resolution, deposing the king's deputy from his rank and place. The vote was carried by acclaim; on which the barons pledged themselves to rise against the deputy, drive him out of Windsor, and replace him in his offices and powers.

Coutance attested that the excommunication, launched by Geoffrey at St. Martin's priory against the aiders and abetters of Richenda, included her brother, on whose orders she had acted, so that Longchamp was already lying under ban of holy Church.

The conference over, Fitz-Neale and two other bishops rode forward on the Windsor road, to tell the deputy what had happened, and to bring him on to Reading. But the deputy's heart had sunk so low that he had left his station in the lane, where he had promised them to wait their coming, and had slipt back to the castle, where, lodging under the Norman keep, he knew that for the moment he was safe.

Longchamp now saw that his affairs were desperate; but he had a great belief in money; and he fancied, from his intercouse with John, that an

enormous bribe might even yet convert his greatest enemy into his closest friend. Early on Sunday morning, two of his trusty servants rode secretly from Windsor to Reading, with authority to offer John any sum of money which that prince might ask for his support. To other persons bribes were to be offered in proportion to their rank and power. At any price, his agents were to buy the prince. These secret agents came too late. At high mass that morning, Reginald of Bath and Hugh of Coventry had declared the deputy cast out by holy Church. All that his servants could obtain for him was the promise of a hearing on the Lodden bridge next day.

Early on Monday, John and his partisans marched out of Reading on the Windsor road. After crossing by the Lodden bridge, he divided his forces ; marching in person with one battalion for Staines, to secure the bridge and gain the London road, while he sent a second battalion to Windsor, in the hope of taking the castle by surprise. Longchamp, timid and perplexed, was riding slowly down the lane towards Lodden bridge, when he met his servant Biset, who, in hanging on the enemy's flank, had seen the stronger company break off and head away towards Staines.

Longchamp perceived their drift. If they arrived in London, and were aided by the citizens, Puintal and his garrison in the Tower might be unable to resist. Shut up in the Tower, his man's surrender of that fortress would be nothing but a question of so many days.

No time was to be lost. If London and the Tower were to be saved, Longchamp must be on the spot. As deputy, he was still the representative of royal power. Loyalty to him meant loyalty to the king. At once he must appeal to the loyal citizens for help.

Riding back to Windsor, he closed the gates, called up his officers, and bade them man the towers, and hold on steadily against all comers. Windsor was a virgin fortress, and he had no fears about the Norman keep. Then, turning round, he massed his guards, and passing through the town, he crossed the bridge, heading straight for London by the upper road.

John had the start, but Longchamp had the nearer route. Each rode as fast as horse could tear. Hounslow was the point of juncture, and the object of each party was to pass that point and gain the common path before the other band came up. Longchamp's men were first, but some of

John's hard riders caught them on the flank and rear. Some scrimmages took place. John's justiciar was killed. Brawling as they rode along —John's van mixed up with Longchamp's rear— they reached the city gates. Longchamp was in front of John.

Longchamp entered Guildhall, with his creature Cornhill at his side. The guildmen soon came thronging in; curious to see that tonsured priest, so dwarfed in figure, so malign in face. A man who had never had the decency to hide his scorn of English churls and burghers, stood before them, pale and trembling, jabbering in a foreign tongue. They could not make him out, and met his gibberish with cries of 'Traitor! Traitor! Out, disturber of the land!' Geoffrey, their guest, and Fitz-Neale, their bishop, were known to be against the deputy. John and his troops were at the gates. Longchamp was already under ban of holy Church. The peers were sworn to put him down, and place a new justiciar and deputy in his seat. Which side should they adopt? Longchamp implored the citizens to close their gates. John was, he said, a traitor to the king, and as they valued Richard's favour, he

entreated them to close their gates. Without their aid, he said, the prince must soon fall back. The citizens were in no mood to listen, and the deputy, hearing the clatter of John's approach, retreated to the Tower.

Next day, alarm-bells summoned the people to St. Paul's, where John, all smiles and courtesies, invited them to enter with the lords and bishops. Longchamp was impeached, convicted, and condemned. Coutance produced his letters from the king; letters empowering him, in case of Longchamp's failure, to depose the deputy, and take his place. Longchamp was then deposed, and Coutance made justiciar in his stead. John was elected regent of the realm.

Longchamp, seeing the Tower surrounded, sent to ask for terms. Some money was secreted in the Tower; but Puintal had neglected to supply the place with stores. Unable to defend himself, Longchamp begged for peace. The bishops who went to see him in the fortress, found him as abject in his fall as he had been imperious in his height. He knelt to them, and swooned with fright. They told him he must resign the seals, and give up Windsor Castle to the prince. John,

as regent of the kingdom and successor to the crown, had the best right to lodge in the royal house.

Longchamp raved and threatened:

'If the Lord shall grant me grace to see my lord the king again you will regret this day. So far as you are able you have given the king's crown away. Tell the prince that Priam still lives. . . . I will neither yield the Castle, nor resign the seals.'

But in his cooler moments he consented to resign. The terms were hard. East of the Tower the barons occupied an open field, to which the deputy was brought, much as a prisoner is conducted to the bar. Hugh, bishop of Coventry, read the charge and sentence:

'You shall bear no further rule in this kingdom. You may keep your bishopric and three small castles, which we propose to grant you as a favour. You are required to give hostages for surrendering Windsor and the other castles, for keeping the public peace, and for abstaining from intrigue.'

The three small castles left to Longchamp were Dover, Hereford, and Cambridge; fortresses

standing far apart, unable to support each other. What could he say, being now a prisoner in their hands? With greater dignity than he had ever shown in his days of power, he simply answered them:

'I yield to force. You, being many, overpower me. You are stronger than myself. I, the king's chancellor and justiciar, am condemned against all forms of law. I yield to force, and nothing else.'

Was Windsor lost? The fallen deputy thought not.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FALLEN DEPUTY.

1191.

Windsor was surrendered to the earl of Arundel, who took the Constable's staff, and raised his banner on the Norman keep.

The other strongholds were to be surrendered to John's lieutenants. Osbert de Longchamp and Mathew de Cleres remained in the victors' camp as hostages for the fallen deputy's good faith.

Next morning that fallen deputy was ferried across to Bermondsey, and left there, in the cloister. To the schemer nothing yet seemed lost. Longchamp had sworn a solemn oath that he would give up, not only Windsor Castle, but Norwich, Nottingham, Tickhill, York, and all the royal fortresses in the kingdom. He had pledged his brother Osbert, and his brother-in-law Mathew de Cleres, for the observance of his oath. But he

had no intention to redeem that bond. The Tower was gone from him; but Windsor Castle, in the hands of his friend Arundel, was still his own. More distant fortresses were waiting for his orders; and though Osbert and Mathew should be put to death, Longchamp was resolved that orders to surrender them should not be given. If he could find a refuge for some weeks, a new commission might arrive from Palestine, and he might feel his enemies in his grasp. His first care was to get across the straits, leaving his partisan Arundel to watch over his interests from the Norman keep.

Two days were spent by him in Bermondsey Abbey, not in the offices of his profession, but in watching the movements of the city boats, and making up disguises for the road. One stage, at least, was covered by a fair excuse. Clement having died, Longchamp's legatine letters were no longer valid, and he spoke of laying them on the altar of St. Thomas. He might ride to Canterbury without exciting much remark. Canterbury was but twelve miles from the coast. In two hours of a dark night he might push from Canterbury to either Sandwich or Dover, as he found the roads lie open. Dover was his own;

the castle being one of the three strongholds thrown to him in contempt. He might remain at Dover till an opportunity to cross the sea arose. From Calais he could order Arundel to hold the Norman keep in the king's name, and his captains at Norwich, York, and other cities, to resist the king's enemies to the last stone and the last man. John might come to terms. Geoffrey might be wearied out. In Paris, he would find a ruler who was anxious to foment a civil war in England. While he still held Windsor and his other castles, he was deputy and chancellor. He could wait in confidence of Richard's favour, for despatches from the Holy Land.

Celestine the Third had been elected pope. Longchamp had agents in his court who understood their trade; so that, in spite of Geoffrey, he had hardly any doubt of getting his legatine powers renewed. Let him obtain those powers, and he could turn the excommunications levelled at himself, his sister, and his followers, against the victors in the Tower.

Stealing away from Bermondsey Abbey, he passed through Rochester to Canterbury, where he put on his disguise. Dover was safely

gained. But he was so much hated in that district on account of Geoffrey, that he dared not let the secret of his presence get abroad. Four nights he lay in hiding, waiting for a passage boat to sail. The fifth day he came forth into the streets—a female pedlar, dressed in petticoat and bodice. Sleeves depended from his arms; a short skirt fell below his knees; a thick veil covered and concealed his face. Under his arm he held a pack of cloth, and in his hand he carried a yard to measure off that cloth. So habited, he ventured to the port.

Unhappily for him, the boat was not yet ready to receive her passengers on board. He sat down on a stone to rest his pack. Some fishwives, eyeing his wares, came up, and asked his price. Unable to speak a word of English, the pigmy shook his head. The women laughed, and called up other women to enjoy the fun. A pedlar with a silent tongue! Was ever pedlar seen who had no saucy word to bandy with his customers? These other women fingered his cloth, asking how much a yard? Seeing him bob his head, they fancied he was deaf, and bawled their questions in his ear. More folks came up. To drive them off, he grinned at them: a monkey-like and ghastly grin.

The fishwives thought him mad as well as deaf. One woman lifted up his veil.

A man's face! Yes, a man's face—hideous in expression, and without a beard! A foreign mountebank, and in a female garb! A cry now ran along the port, 'A man in woman's clothes—a man in woman's clothes!'

The rabble gathered round that pedlar and his pack of cloth—sailors, dockmen, porters, carpenters—who asked him who he was, where he lodged, what he was doing in a woman's clothes? As he could give no answers, they began to pluck and prod him—tugging at his sleeves, tearing away his petticoats, pushing him in the mud, and dragging him over chalk and flint. Unable and unwilling to explain himself, the wretch was driven along the quays and streets, shoved by the men, pelted by the women, his face besmirched, his garments torn to rags, till he was forced by his tormentors down some cellar-steps, and shut up, as a vagrant and impostor, in a dismal vault.

Had these rough folk but known who the impostor was!

Bruised, beaten, and insulted by a Dover mob, under the walls and towers of his own castle, Longchamp was compelled to treat. His sister,

though she held the castle, could do nothing for him. When the people found out who he was, the situation grew so serious that he had to send post haste to London, and implore the council to protect his life. The council ordered his release, and took him from the cellar; but the runaway was now a prisoner in their hands a second time. To gain his freedom, he proposed to yield up all the fortresses according to his oath—including Arundel's surrender of the Norman keep.

His offers were accepted by the victors. Every one was glad that he should go abroad; and after his surrender of the strongholds he was free to go. The victors wanted peace, and not revenge. What would the barons gain by putting out Osbert de Longchamp's eyes? What would the citizens gain by shedding Mathew de Cleres' blood?

All parties found their fortunes in his fall. Geoffrey returned to York, and Coutance got possession of Windsor Castle and the Constable's staff. John, as regent of the kingdom, held the first position in the country, with a certainty of the succession should his brother die.

When Coutance took possession of Beauclerc's

house and William's keep, he thought his cares were at an end. Longchamp was expelled, and Arundel deposed. John, the king's brother, seemed his friend and ally. Elinor, the only person who could give him trouble, was in Aquitaine. But Longchamp was not beaten yet; and Elinor, the queen-mother, was observing him with an inquisitive eye.

Longchamp had money, and with money he might purchase friends and favours. Paris and Rome lay open to his golden arguments—a kind of logic in which the fallen deputy excelled. Before he came to Paris, he arranged with Maurice of Notre Dame, to meet him in the street with a procession of his clergy, and conduct him to his altar as a sufferer for the Church. Clothed in this venal sanctity, Longchamp dropped down the Seine towards Rouen; but the new Constable of Windsor had been before him in the Norman towns. Coutance had published the excommunication of Longchamp from the altar of his cathedral, and from every pulpit in his diocese. The fugitive was repelled from Normandy as an outcast from the Church. Longchamp appealed from Coutance to Richard and Celestine. Richard was far away, but Celestine was near. In ten

days he might hear from Rome; in ten days, with his means of action, he might take the first step on his journey back to Windsor Castle.

He was not mistaken as to Rome. Celestine wrote to the English prelates. He had heard, he said, of the outrage committed by John and his followers on the papal legate; he commanded all his bishops to excommunicate the criminals, and to lay an interdict on their lands till his offended legate was appeased. Celestine thought the criminals were John and other barons. Not a word in his epistle aims at monks and canons, bishops and archbishops. Acting on his letter, the fallen deputy called on the venerable Hugh of Lincoln to convene the prelates and execute the pope's commands. He sent a list of the enemies who were to be smitten by the papal curse. John was to be spared, for some days only—time being given him to repent and make amends. But Coutance, Hugh of Coventry, and Godfrey of Winchester, with twenty-five others, many of them in holy orders, were to suffer ban and curse. Coutance, whom the fallen deputy described as Pontius Pilate, was to be excommunicated under the direct authority of our Lord the Pope.

Smiling at these paper pellets, the master of Windsor Castle set these orders from our lord the pope aside, and seized the property of his enemy in the diocese of Ely. Longchamp was staggered by these blows, the force of which his legatine letters could do little to either break or soothe. From Windsor Castle the victorious Pilate saw the kingdom at his feet.

Yet discords soon broke out, which offered the fallen deputy a chance. Puiset declared that Durham was independent of York. Geoffrey, as archbishop of York, insisted on Puiset's obedience to his orders. Puiset appealed to Rome, and Geoffrey excommunicated Puiset. John took his cousin's part. John, in truth, desired another conflict and another change. Finding that his title of regent and his castles at Marlborough and Lancaster left him but the second personage in the realm, John wanted to reside in Windsor, and display his banner from the Norman keep. As next of kin, accepted by the barons and supported by his mother Elinor as Richard's heir, he had a right to live in the royal house.

While John was fretting in his jealousy, two offers came to him from France.

Philippe had quitted Palestine, much galled against the English people and their prince. He burned to do them harm, and Longchamp was at hand to teach him how his gall might work. Each wrote to John, as being a man inclined to help them—at a price. Philippe invited John to Paris, to discuss a plan for raising him to the English throne. Longchamp tempted him with a great sum of money to procure his pardon and recall.

Queen Elinor, alarmed by both these movements—faithfully reported by her secret agents—hurried from Aquitaine to Windsor Castle. As the regent of her son, she had a right to lodge at Windsor, and she instantly took possession of the royal house. From Windsor she issued a warrant, forbidding her son John to leave the kingdom. Coutance, as justiciar, issued a similar command. But John refused obedience to these orders. He was ready to set sail. He had taken Longchamp's money, and accepted Philippe's invitation. Elinor called a council at Windsor to consider his refusal. Queen-mother and councillors were clear that John should neither go to France nor suffer Longchamp to return. But how were they to stay a man who might be king next

day? A comedy was played; John standing out, and Elinor standing out, for terms; but with the queen's connivance, John got the better of all parties; keeping Longchamp's money, and ousting Coutance from the Norman keep.

John took up his position in the royal house.

CHAPTER X.

THE QUEEN MOTHER.

1193.

Elinor, in her own right duchess of Aquitaine, and by the *wrath of God* (to use her own expression) queen of England, had been one of the most beautiful and profligate women of her time. While she was living with her first husband, Louis the Seventh of France, she had scandalized her court by an incestuous passion for her uncle, Raymond de Poitou. When she wandered into Palestine as a crusader, she had caused the wonder of two camps by an amour with Sultan Saladin. Later in life, she had fallen into a guilty passion for Geoffrey Plantagenet, count of Anjou. After Geoffrey's death, she had transferred her shameful passion to his son. At length, King Louis's patience had been worn out, and in spite of his desire to keep her duchy of Aquitaine, he

had put her from his house, and stript her of the names of wife and queen. Six weeks after her divorce from Louis, she had married Henry of Anjou, and in less than four months after her wedding-day had presented him with a son. Henry had found his wife as false to him as she had been to Louis. Bertrand the troubadour was only one in a long list of men for whom she had kept a corner in her heart. Henry, in revenge, had sought for consolation in the company of such women as Fair Rosamond. There were others. Elinor had gone so far as to accuse him of debauching Alais, the young French princess, then being educated at her court as Richard's future bride. In truth, her conduct towards the king, her husband, had been one continuous act of outrage. She had put on male attire. She had incited Richard to rebel against his father. She had libelled Constance of Brittany, her son Geoffrey's wife; accusing her of infidelity to her marriage vows. She had egged on John to disobedience and defiance. In the madness of her hatred towards the king, her husband, she had tried to fling herself once more into the arms of Louis.

King Henry, like King Louis, had married

Aquitaine. Each found that he had bought that duchy at too great a price. Like Louis, Henry had sought relief from Elinor in a divorce. Failing to gain a legal separation, he had lodged her in a jail; but she had managed to outlive her tyrant; and at seventy years of age, the queen-duchess now at Windsor Castle, was as bold and subtle an intriguer as she had been at the age of thirty-five.

No love of right and justice brought her over sea. She feared lest John, by going to France, should put his future hopes in peril. Richard would soon come back. He was already leaving Palestine. All England would be on his side; and if he found his brother in the field against his right, that brother would be swept away.

John was afraid of her. She loved and spoiled him more than any other of her children; yet the man who feared neither angel nor devil, was afraid of his indulgent mother. Profligate as he was, John owned in her a spirit far more vicious and despotic than his own. In her, he bent before the full-grown majesty of crime.

Queen Elinor took no steps to drive the intruder from the royal house. In vain the justiciar clamoured for his rights. With Windsor in his

power John had less reason for a journey into France. He had the crown without the peril of a rising. Elinor expected him to rest content and safe within the realm. At Windsor he was like a king. Coutance might rave of being ousted, and the barons, stung by John's falsehood, might demand inquiry; but so long as John remained at home, the queen-mother was satisfied with her son. Wallingford, as well as Windsor, had been seized by John, so that her son was master of the strongest castles on the Thames.

But if the queen was satisfied, not so the barons, many of whom were playing fast and loose, like John himself. Roger de Lacy, constable of Chester, showed his teeth. Alan de Lec, who had surrendered Nottingham, and Pierre de Bovincourt, who had surrendered Tickhill to John, were servants of Lacy. He strung up Alan, and he threatened to string up Pierre. John interceded for his creature. Lacy replied to John by hanging his servant to a tree in chains. A country squire, who saw some kites and crows at work on the dangling corpse, threw stones at them and drove them off. Lacy strung up that country squire.

Finding this spirit breaking out among the

barons, Elinor took the bold step of asking Longchamp to return. If they were going to question her son and punish his adherents, she would bring their enemy to the front, and even take his part against them. John was willing to assist her; seeing his way to treat with both the fallen deputy and that fallen deputy's adversaries. Master of Windsor, he would now be able to give the casting vote.

Longchamp had found support in Paris and in Rome. As Richard's deputy, he claimed to represent the king. Celestine, the new pontiff, had renewed his legatine powers. In theory, therefore, Longchamp held the chief authority in State and Church. Dover was in his sister's keeping, so that he could enter the kingdom when he pleased. Replying to the queen's overtures, he crossed to Dover, took up his lodgings at the castle, and despatched a messenger to Windsor. Elinor and John, receiving his messenger in a friendly spirit, proposed to the barons and justices who had driven him out, to bring him back. The barons got alarmed. For them, Longchamp's return meant new trials, new anathemas, new confiscations. They implored the queen to say no more. They dropped the Windsor business. Rather than

face the dwarf, now armed anew with spiritual thunders, they agreed to let John stay at Windsor and retain the fortresses he had filched.

But John was not disposed to yield so easily. Longchamp had offered him a bribe, asking no more from him than that he should stand aside, leaving the barons and the deputy to fight their quarrel to an end. John offered to throw the legate over at a price, but not until his price was paid. He liked to have his money on the nail. As usual, he was frank and plain:

'I have only to step aside, and be paid seven hundred pounds of silver. Money is what I want. You understand me? Money. You are wise and ought to see your way.'

The barons understood. John was for sale, and they must buy him at his price. A bargain was arranged. John was to be paid two thousand marks, fifteen hundred of which were levied on the absent deputy's goods and lands. No more was to be said about the way in which he got the Norman keep.

This money being paid, John wrote to Longchamp, warning him to depart the realm; nay, if he loved his life, to quit the land at once, and never more set foot on English soil. Longchamp,

though amazed, thought fit to cross. A Dover boat was hired, and the deputy returned to France.

In no long time Windsor was to the front again. Richard was coming home. The ship in which he sailed from Palestine reached Brindisi, but after leaving Brindisi every trace of king and ship was lost. Many believed that ship was wrecked. News of Lion Heart's captivity first came from Philippe, who proposed that John should seize the crown, and marry Madame Alais, Richard's repudiated bride. Philippe offered his aid by sea and land.

John felt his way, and failed. The councillors asked for evidence of Richard's death. None of the greater lords would take the oath to John. He raised an army, chiefly Welsh, which he entrenched at Windsor. Learning that Richard was a prisoner in an Austrian dungeon, he resolved to snatch the circlet from his brother's brow. The terms imposed by Philippe were extremely hard. John was to risk a usurper's doom. He was to marry Alais, the discarded bride of Richard, with her blighted name. He was to swear allegiance to the king of France, not only for his French duchies, but his English royalties and

lordships. By the treaty signed at Paris, John accepted the position of a vassal prince.

On his return to England, he rode to Windsor to review his troops, and thence to London, where he called the council, and informed them that the king his brother was no more. On Coutance doubting his bad news, the prince replied that, whether he were dead or living, Richard would not be seen again on English ground. In truth, Philippe had engaged to pay the emperor to keep his captive a perpetual prisoner.

Coutance and the barons flew to arms. Their first care was to guard the coast. A fleet of Flemish ships, escorting French soldiers, filled the straits, in sight of Dover cliffs. Coutance proclaimed a general levy, and the people, hearing that their fields and gardens were about to be over-run by foreign riff-raff, seized their pikes and manned their ships. In place of waiting for the enemy, these levies put to sea, searched that enemy's ports, fought with his ships, and set his quays and battlements on fire.

Deprived of his expected help from France, John was unable to make head against his English foes. Retiring from the Thames, he fell back on the north. Windsor was at once surrounded, sum-

moned to surrender, and besieged by the justiciar and his comrades. Coutance was unwilling to damage the king's house. Many of his friends were in the keep, whom he desired to spare. He, therefore, occupied the park, the town, and bridge; intending to starve out the Welsh mercenaries left by John. This prince took up a line from Nottingham to Lancaster; but this defensive line was broken through, not only from the south, but from the north. Geoffrey and Puiset, laying their feuds aside, marched their forces into Tickhill. Doncaster was seized and fortified by the loyal barons. Wallingford fell next. The Peak held out a little, but the barons and their tenants soon prevailed against John's lieutenants. In the southern counties, Windsor alone defied the patriotic league.

Coutance took measures to reduce the lower ward, by way of opening his approaches to the Norman keep. Engines were brought into the town, and planted near the walls and tower. Parts of the curtain were reduced to rag. Assaulting columns were drawn up in sight of the walls and gates. The mercenaries in the place were told that unless they yielded the king's house to the king's justiciar, they would be killed to the last man.

No hope of succour being nigh, the mercenaries

yielded to superior force; but broke the truce as soon as they had passed the gates; each fellow, under panic, taking to his heels and scattering to the underwoods. As strangers in the country, speaking no English, and detested equally by the troops and by the cottagers, their destruction was assured. Hunted through the Windsor copse, and killed as soon as they were captured, most of the mercenary soldiers perished by the sword.

Windsor being lost by John, the prince, unable to maintain his cause in England, crossed the sea, and sought a refuge with his ally, the king of France.

Elinor now stept into the lines to save her son. Richard's return was still uncertain. Should he perish in his German prison, John was his adopted heir; adopted in defiance of the legal right of Arthur of Brittany. Neither Coutance nor the barons dared to push the prince too far. A truce was signed. Coutance agreed to waive his claim to lodge at Windsor. Elinor assumed the post of Constable, and riding to the Castle hill, spared the pride of her defeated son, by taking possession of the royal house and Norman keep in King Richard's name.

CHAPTER XI.

MAUD DE BRAOSE.

1210.

King John was so fond of Windsor, that after his usurpation of the crown, he was never long away from the royal house. Winter and summer he lodged on the Windsor ridge. Here he kept his festivals and held his councils; here he laid up his stores of corn and wine, of cloth and spice. Windsor was for him a safer stronghold than the Tower, and hither he removed his jewels and his plate. More than Winchester, more than Westminster, Windsor became the residence of his court, the scenery of his intrigues, the witness of his cruelties. To Windsor flocked all those who wished to gain his smiles. Even when the thunders of Holy Church were rolling through the sky, Windsor was crowded by his knights and barons. Windsor was the centre of events, both

private and public, in his dark and sinister reign.

Among the private doings of that reign, the foremost place is due to the imprisonment of Maud de Braose, and of her son, William de Braose, the younger, in the Norman keep.

Maud de Hay, who came — under the name of Maud de Braose — to die so miserably in the Norman keep, was mistress of many castles in the western marches; Radnor Castle, Brecon Castle, Bradwardine Castle, Maud Castle, Hay Castle, and other strongholds. She was strong enough to make war on the native princes. Early in life she had married William de Braose, fourth lord of Bramber; a direct descendant of that William de Braose who had fought at Hastings, and received a settlement in the Sussex downs. Braose, on marrying Maud de Hay, had left his castle at Bramber for the border country, where he made himself a name of fear, not only to the native princes, but the king's lieutenants in the march. Nor was his wife less swift to strike. When some of the natives rose against her, in her husband's absence, she put so many of her prisoners to the sword, that the story of what was called 'the slaughter of Maud's Castle' rang through the

whole country, cowing the most turbulent spirits of the mountain land.

All parties in the kingless court had striven to gain the favour of this martial pair. Maud held her castles, Braose took the field. Longchamp had bought them at a price, and they had served him faithfully. At the peace of Winchester, Braose had been one of Longchamp's securities. After Longchamp fell, Braose had lent his services to John, espousing his cause so violently, that people accused him of forcing that prince to do many of his unlawful acts against his own will and judgment! Braose had been one of the lords who took Elinor's word against the legitimacy of Arthur's birth. He thought a child, born of a foreign mother in a foreign country, not the best king for England to adopt. When John was crowned, mainly by the help of this border chief, men prophesied that a curse would fall on Baron de Braose and on all his house.

But years passed by, and no one saw that curse descend. Braose was with the king at Windsor; with him in the court and with him in the chase. He grew into years, he and his partner Maud, in grace and peace. William, their eldest son, married Maud de Clare, a daughter of Richard,

earl of Gloucester, a close connexion of the king. Margaret, their eldest daughter, married Walter, sixth baron de Lacy in England, and lord of Trim in Ireland. Lacy, like Clare, was a connexion of the king. No higher matches in the peerage could be found than those secured by the offspring of William de Braose and Maud de Hay.

Through Lacy, Braose got entangled in the Irish business, which led him into quarrels with the king; ending in his exile from the kingdom, and the murder of his wife and son in the Norman keep.

King John had lands in Limerick to sell; at least he thought so, and a sale of them was made. Braose agreed to pay the king five thousand marks, in ten instalments of five hundred marks, for those Irish lands. But sale implies a title, and the title to these lands was in dispute. Philip, bishop of Worcester, held the greater part of them, and he was not inclined to give them up. Theobald, brother of the primate, held another part of them, and he was equally disinclined to give them up. Unable to get possession, Braose followed the king into Normandy with his complaints. John, wanting his money, bade the holders

of the leases to retire; but neither Philip nor Theobald would obey the king's command. Five or six years were spent, and nothing being done, Braose refused to pay his marks. Philip, resisting force by force, threw himself on the protection of William the Lion, king of Scots. Theobald took the safer line of trickery and bribery. John, much pressed for money, requested Braose to pay his money and take his chance of getting the estate. Braose hung back. Then John gave orders for an entry into Bramber, and a seizure of his goods in payment of the debt. But Braose knew his royal friend, and was before him on the Sussex downs. Bramber was stript. John, in his rage and disappointment, ordered Gerard, one of foreign mercenaries, to seize the border castles; and the king himself moved down to Gloucester to support his man.

Maud de Braose, attended by Lord Ferrars, her nephew, and other of her kinsfolk, met the king at Gloucester, and entreated him to give her husband audience, and allow him to explain his acts. The king agreed; naming his castle at Hereford as the place of interview. There he appeared, and offered to excuse his course. John named his terms of pardon. Braose was to pay the purchase

money for his Irish lands, and give up Radnor castle, Hay castle, and Brecon castle to the king, together with his son William and five other hostages, until the whole debt of five thousand marks due on the Irish manors had been paid.

Surrounded by the king's guards in Hereford castle, Braose was compelled to yield. Orders were signed to his lieutenants in the three castles to surrender them; but these castles were hardly in the king's hands before Braose, having gained his liberty, tried to get them back by force. Failing in his assault, he sacked the country, setting the king's town of Leominster on fire. Gerard was sent to raise the country, and the king himself pressed on to the insurgent shires. Maud and her husband crossed the Irish sea, seeking a refuge from the storm among the Lacys and their powerful kinsmen. John, still pressing after them, summoned the Lacys to refuse them shelter. Hunted like a wild beast, Braose recrossed the sea, in hopes of making terms. On John's arrival at Pembroke, he received a visit from the fugitive. Braose offered to buy his peace. John, no longer satisfied with his five thousand marks, demanded forty thousand. Braose yielded, but the king refused to treat with him as principal in

the affair. Maud de Hay, his consort, was regarded as the ruling spirit:

'It is your wife, and not yourself, who can arrange this business. She is in Ireland; you must go with me to her.'

Not liking John's proposal, Braose contrived to slip away.

William, his son, escaped from custody, and joined his mother. But the Lacys could not stand against the king; and as Maud de Braose would not yield, she was compelled to fly. She and her son, together with her son's wife and their little ones, turned towards the north, hoping to make the port of Carrick, where a boat was ready to pass them over to the Scottish coast. They reached the boat, and put to sea, but a Carrick skipper followed, overtook and mastered them. John received his prisoners with delight, bringing them to Bristol, where he flung them into jail.

To buy her peace, and that of all her family, Maud de Braose offered to pay the whole sum of forty thousand marks; entering into bonds of ten thousand marks more that each instalment of the money should be paid as it fell due. John snapt at her proposal, and the terms were written down and signed.

Maud de Braose and her son, William the Younger, were brought from Bristol to Windsor, as securities for these debts. But how was that enormous ransom to be raised? It was a royal sum, and would have taxed the revenues of a prince. Braose, in despair of finding so much money as even the first instalment, left his hiding-place in the Sussex uplands, donned the garb of a mendicant, and creeping to Shoreham, hired a boat and crossed the sea into France.

When the first sum fell due, Maud had to own that she was not prepared to pay. The tyrant flung her into his Norman keep—she and her son into a single vault—and left the mother and her son in that wretched cell with nothing but a sheaf of raw wheat and a hunk of raw pork. The doors were barred, and in that chamber they were left to starve and die.

For ten days they were left alone. On the eleventh day, the bolts were drawn, the doors thrown open. Mother and son were dead.

The young man had been the first to fail. Seated on the floor, and leaning against the wall, he had met his lingering death. His head was bent a little towards the ground. Maud was near her son. She too was seated on the floor, leaning

against the wall; but her face had fallen on her son's broad chest, and there she lay, embracing him with her last sigh of life. In that last sigh the savagery of hunger had broken on her love. His cheek was gnawed. The mother's farewell kiss had turned into a ravenous bite.

Braose, the fugitive, died soon afterwards in France.

Maud de Braose, wife of the younger William, was confined in Corffe Castle for about a year, when, for political reasons, she was given up to her father, Richard de Clare.

In the last moments of remorse, John granted a sum of money for perpetual masses to be said for the souls of his victims, William de Braose, Maud de Braose, his wife, and William de Braose, his eldest son.

These murders in the Norman fortress were the opening passages of the barons' war.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BARONS' WAR.

1215–6.

Sunday, May the tenth, 1215, was a stirring day at Windsor Castle.

John came riding in from Westminster, hot and headlong, with the archbishop of Canterbury, and the marshal of England, at his side. A restless man, who seldom slept seven nights in one bed, John was a rider likely to put these elders on their mettle; but Langton, his primate, and Pembroke, his marshal, kept the pace, and entered Windsor with the king. A clang of hoofs, a clash of swords, rose in the air. A rabble of foreign troops were racing at the royal heels, and all the demons of civil war seemed prancing in their wake.

King John had passed through many a bitter time, but hardly one so bitter as this tenth of May. The barons were afield, calling their force the

Army of God and Holy Church, and claiming from the king a restoration of their ancient laws. Many of his peers were out in arms, and nearly all his fortresses were in their grasp. London was with them heart and soul.

For three days John had lurked at Westminster, intriguing for support among the burghers, but his agents, though adroit and busy, had been foiled in their attempt. The citizens feared him, and he hated them. Six years ago he had removed his exchequer from Westminster to Northampton out of spite. He hated them, for they were not his men. He hated them, for they were free. A state of terror, verging on despair, had led him to invoke their help. But not until the barons were at Bedford, with their front towards London, had he stooped to fawn where he was used to smite. His lures had failed. No party could be formed for him within the city gates. All currents of opinion set the other way. Would they be even neutral, shutting their gates against both parties? No, the guildmen would not promise him to stand apart. In fact, the barons were their friends—bound with the burghers in a common cause.

Tried by his peers in Paris for the murder of his nephew, Arthur of Brittany, John had been

found guilty, and deposed from all his fiefs in France. Philippe, executor of the sentence, had overrun his duchies, and annexed them to his crown. Inflamed by these indignities, John had summoned his English vassals to cross the sea, and drive his judges and despoilers out of Rouen; but these English vassals, being sick of France and of the French connexion, had refused to cross the sea. Disliking the duchies, they loathed to see their sovereign kneeling to a king of France. John had to fight alone. Hiring a mercenary band, he had measured swords with Philippe, and been beaten at Bovines. Laying the blame on those who had deserted him, he had come back in a passion, swearing that he would make the deserters feel his wrath. 'I hate those men like viper's blood.' He mentioned Cardinal Langton as a fellow he would like to hang. Fitzwalter, leader of the insurgents, was an object of his rage; but his revenge had stomach for a hundred more. 'I shall at last be lord and king of England,' he exclaimed, as he rode in and out among his mercenary lines. His Flemings should be brought to Kent; his Welshmen should advance into the midland shires. The vassals who had left their liege should feel the weight of a king's

displeasure. But the cardinal — cool, far-sighted, popular with all classes — was a match, and more than a match, for John.

Had they been left without a leader and a policy, the barons might have fallen one by one, each fighting in his own affair. The cardinal gave these lords a cry, and organized them in a league. That cry was for their ancient laws — a policy which brought the nation to their back. The cry that swelled from every English throat was the recovery of their Saxon laws. That cry was often heard from Cardinal Langton's lips. John's ears were deafened by the words:

'Away with unjust laws! Restore good laws! Give us back the laws of Alfred and of Edward!'

John fumed and stormed at such petitions; and the cardinal induced the barons to embark their fortunes in this popular cause. His task was not a light one. Few of the lords had cared to look into the Saxon laws. Langton told them what they were, and how they could be turned against the king. A league was formed, every member of which swore, before the altar of St. Edward, never to lay down his arms until the king consented to restore their Saxon laws. And

so the king and cardinal met—John breathing fire and fury, Langton hinting at the need for prudence and reform. 'You mind the Church, and leave the state to me,' snarled John. When Langton told him what the barons wished, he snapped him up:

'Why not demand my crown at once? God's teeth, I grant no liberties to men who seek to make me a slave!'

So long as he was safe, the king kept up this tone. But things were changing both for him and for his enemies. Last night, Saturday, the ninth of May, Fitzwalter and the patriot forces were encamped along the northern roads; to-day, at early mass, they entered Aldgate, by connivance with the citizens. Bardel, the reeve or mayor, ordering the citizens to be at church, had opened all the city gates, so that during early mass the Army of God and Holy Church might enter unopposed. St. Paul's was crowded; so were all the city churches. When the worshippers came out from mass, they found their walls and barbicans in Robert Fitzwalter's hands.

No longer safe in Westminster—an open place, little more than a mile from Ludgate—John took horse, followed by Cardinal Langton and Marshal

Pembroke, for Windsor, where, under shelter of the Norman keep, he felt himself secure against surprise.

A conference was called in the King's House. John knew that Cardinal Langton was the chief and ruler of the league. He also knew that Pembroke was, in heart, against him. But his mercenaries were unequal to the work of meeting his barons in the open field ; still more unequal to the task of storming the great city. He had now no duchies on the Channel at his back. What could he do ? That was the point to be debated in the royal house. Propose a truce ? treat with his vassals ? bend his neck before Fitzwalter, and accept his terms of peace ?

Langton and Pembroke, speaking in their place as councillors, assured him that he ought to yield ; and, in the end, would have to yield.

John was in despair. His foes were many, his adherents few. Even those who sat with him in council were, as he suspected, agents of his enemies in the capital. Not only was the strength of England in the field against him, but the men were fighting for a cause in which each soldier felt a personal stake. For such a cause men fight and die. What were his bands of hired assassins

against such troops ? If he attempted to resist, a more disastrous field than that of Bovines might be waiting on his arms.

Langton whispered the word ' armistice,' and John reluctantly gave way—in words. Never had he felt more hardened in his evil courses ; but his foes were closing round him, and his mercenary troops were far afield. He wanted time. By holding out a hope of peace, he might deceive the cardinal, divide the barons, and disperse their bands. With falsehood on his lips, and treachery in his heart, he signed the armistice.

Some days were spent by Langton in riding from Windsor to London, and from London back to Windsor, trying to arrange a place of meeting for the king and leaguers. John was no less busy. Secretly calling up his foreign bands, he massed his troops at Windsor, filling the keep and towers, and tenting his main body in the forest glades.

The barons named their terms—a meeting with the king in person, and a restoration of their ancient laws ; the restoration to be made by royal charter, under the great seal of England. John agreed to every point, leaving to his adversaries the choice of time and place.

Monday, June the fifteenth, was named by Langton as the time; an open field near Staines, known by the name of Runnymede, was named by Langton as the place. In days long past, ere yet the Britons were a Christian folk, Runnymede had been a holy place, to which the priests had come, with mystic runes, and shown the people, in their times of trouble, by what sacrifices they might appease their gods. In later days, the Saxon elder men had met in witans and speech-motes on this meadow by the river bank. Here, at Runnymede, the Saxon laws had been debated and proclaimed. The spot was therefore hallowed to the cause for which the barons and the citizens were in arms.

Windsor was full of earls and bishops. Langton was with the king, as were also William of London, Peter of Winchester, Hugh of Lincoln, Jocelyn of Bath, Walter of Worcester, William of Coventry, and Benedict of Rochester. Pembroke, the king's marshal, was at his side, together with the earls of Salisbury, Arundel, and Warren. But these persons were his keepers rather than his servants. In the train which followed him from Windsor to Runnymede on Monday morning, only two men had his confidence—Pandulph, the papal legate, who protected him as a vassal of the pope, and

Almeric, master of the Temple, who regarded him as a soldier of the cross.

No better than a prisoner in the barons' camp at Runnymede, the king had to accept a peace which he detested, under the very battlements of his royal house and his Norman keep.

John slept that night at Windsor, leaving Fitzwalter and the lords encamped at Staines. The summer days were long, but not too long for the great business to be done. John had surrendered to the barons, and the government of his kingdom had to be transferred. Each morning, John rode out from Windsor to the field beside the river brink. Long conferences took place ; Langton acting for the lords, and Pandulph for the king.

Windsor Castle, with the royal house, the forest, and the keep, were left to John, and he affected to be satisfied with those shows of royal power.

Three nights John lay at Windsor, stupified by events. No ray of light came in to cheer his gloom ; his former vassals were his masters ; he, a puppet in their hands, was forced to act on their decrees, and even mark them as his own. Windsor now seemed to him a prison. As yet, he

kept his bedroom and his cabinet; but his adversaries, with an overwhelming army, were at Staines. While he remained at Windsor, he was hardly free to think, much less to act. In order to regain his freedom he must fly.

The vault in which he had starved Maud de Braose to death was close at hand. The friends of Braose were at Staines. The kith and kin of Gerard, his bailiff in the border lands, were banished by his lords. Who could say that he would still be spared? Fear lent him courage. At the worst his life was safe. Some months ago, he had taken up the cross; not because he meant to fight the infidels; but because a pilgrim was protected by the Church. By marking the cross of a crusader on his sleeve, a layman gained the character of a priest. John's person was secure, for to assail him was to strike a soldier of the Lord. The crime was sacrilege.

This sacred character gave him heart. Like an ecclesiastic, John could go into the field, with scarcely any fear. The cross, held up in battle, would protect his life. And then, the pope, his master, would be strong for him, even against the cardinal. Pandulph was at his elbow, ready with the whisper that the pontiff would in future be his

friend. Pandulph was right. Since John had sworn allegiance to Innocent, and begun to pay a tribute for his crown, the papacy must desire to keep his rights intact. What was the vassal's, was the lord's. Men who rebelled against the king, might raise their swords against the pope. Men who denied the king's right to bring in foreign troops might very readily deny his right to hand his kingdom over to a foreign priest. John was Innocent's man. John's enemies were Innocent's enemies, even though they held the rank of bishops in England and cardinals in Rome.

On Friday morning John left Windsor Castle secretly with the papal legate; riding for Odiham and Winchester, which they reached that night. Pandulph went over sea to Rome, with orders to procure the suspension of Cardinal Langton and the excommunication of Lord Fitzwalter and the other barons. Agents were despatched by John to Calais, Caen, and Bordeaux, with instructions to beat up hireling troops, by offering them unlimited pillage and unquestioned license. Sweepings of stews and jails were to be hired as soldiers of the Church. Fighting for king and pope, they were to take their wages in what form they pleased —in lust and theft, in fire and blood; every vil-

lage they entered being given up to them for outrage, every castle they assailed for sack.

Innocent annulled the great charter, released King John from his oath, and urged the barons to renounce their compact and submit. A pontiff having spoken, many of the barons wavered in their zeal. A cardinal was a great man, but a pope was greater than a cardinal. They had followed Langton, in the hope that they were serving holy Church. But now the pontiff had pronounced against their army and their cause. Should they resist? If so, worse things might fall on them. John of Chester and Gilbert of Kirkby, frightened by the pope, submitted to the king, and their example brought in many more. The monks, who had been acting with the cardinal, left the camp. Peasant and yeoman followed, fearing to incur the wrath of Holy Church. The army fell away.

John was at Dover, with his mercenary troops, now pouring in from every foreign port. From Dover he set out for London. Rochester stayed him for a time, and after starving Rochester he turned aside towards Guildford. Later in the year, he came to Windsor, which he occupied without a blow. Leaving a garrison strong enough to send out corps to Hounslow, cutting the lines of road

to London, he turned up north, burning the villages on his march. He wrecked all castles that resented his approach. Sated with lust and blood, he came back to the royal house, his enemies crushed, his country at his feet.

John was at Windsor Castle, gloating on his triumph, when he learnt that his barons were inviting Louis of France to cross the Channel and assume his crown. At once he made his preparations for defence. Engelard de Cigony, one of his mercenaries, was appointed keeper of Windsor Castle and the forest, with Andrew de Chanceaux and sixty knights, and their full companies under him. Engelard de Cigony and Andrew de Chanceaux were two of those foreign mercenaries who had served the king so well, and were so odious to the people, that they had won a place of infamy in the great charter. Like the kinsmen of Gerard, they were specially expelled the kingdom. John had drawn them back, and on his sudden change of front, confided to their bold and skilful hands the safety of his royal house.

John, falling back from Windsor, hung about the western shires, while all his towns and fortresses, excepting Dover and Windsor, fell into the power of Louis. Louis himself laid siege to

Dover, while his cousin, the Count de Nevers, took command of the English forces on the Windsor slopes.

Windsor was strong, and well supplied with stores. The well within the keep was copious, and the water excellent. Cows and horses could be brought in by Beauclerc's passage under the royal house. High walls were strengthened by deep ditches and abrupt scarps. A massive tower, known as the Marshal's tower, connected the royal house with the Norman keep. A second tower protected the approaches on the north; and these two towers were near enough to cross their fire. Westward, the slope fell rapidly, and was supposed to need no outer works. Under a brave commander, the Castle had no cause for fear, even though the slopes were stormed by French and English troops.

Engines for throwing stones were laid against the walls. Slingers and bowmen were employed to knock down the defenders. But Cigony and the foreign captains in the Castle held their ground. Storm after storm was tried. Weeks passed, but Windsor still held out. If either wall or house were injured, it was soon repaired. Assaults were gallantly repelled. In turn the

garrison broke out, cut down the balisters and burnt the beams. Once, John approached the lines, and then the English troops encamped about his Castle hoped that a battle would ensue. But John was prudent. Some of his Welsh retainers crept so close as to be able to throw their shafts within the lines; but seeing that the keep was in no danger, John drew off and spared his men, content with finding that, in Cigony's hands, the royal house was safe.

Raising the siege, Nevers pursued his enemy into the north. Windsor escaped the shame of yielding to a foreign captain; and the gallant Engelard de Cigony, in spite of all the curses levelled at his head, remained at Windsor Castle, keeping till the king's death the fortress he had saved.

CHAPTER XIII.

SECOND KING'S HOUSE.

1241.

The First King's House, erected by Beauclerc for his Saxon queen, suffered so much in these assaults that Henry of Winchester, on coming to the throne, removed his quarters from the upper to the lower baily. War had proved that the weakest side of Windsor Castle was the western front. To guard that line, a wall, with flanking and protecting towers, was wanted on the slope descending towards the town. By sweeping in this slope, a space was gained inside the lines as ample as the upper ward.

A curtain, starting from the Inner Gate (now called the Norman tower), was thrown along the edge of chalk from east to west, supported by Winchester tower, and Almoner's tower, and ending in a round work called the Belfry, now the Curfew

tower. This curtain covered the whole northern front. A similar curtain ran from Curfew tower due south, supported by a second and a third work, now called Garter tower and Salisbury tower. This curtain overlapped the town. From that second angle a third curtain ran due east, ending in the great bastion, known as the Constable's lodging, and more recently as Henry the Third's tower. This outwork touched the Norman keep, completing the defensive lines.

A shaft was sunk within the walls, between Curfew tower and Garter tower, from which a slope, arched over and screened by masonry, was driven into the outer ditch. This passage, going down by steps, not ramps, served the same purposes as Beauclerc's shaft under the royal house. The entrance from the ditch and town was covered by a barbican, and this barbican was defended by a strong portcullis.

Under Henry of Winchester the Castle hill acquired its final shape; the main features being the three great bailies: an upper ward, a middle ward, and a lower ward.

Beauclerc's house, though battered, was not wholly gone. The hall, the chapel of St. Edward, and some of the domestic offices remained; but

Henry, having space at his command, began to build for himself within the lower ward, a longer hall, a finer chapel, and a braver house. Like Beauclerc, Henry aspired to be accepted as an English prince. He, too, adored St. Edward as his guardian saint, and he proposed to honour that saint with a more splendid shrine than he had yet received in either Westminster or Windsor. Near to that shrine, and under the protection of St. Edward, he designed a Second King's House—a home for his posterity to the end of time. His chapel and his palace, with the courts and cloisters round about them, were to cover nearly half the ground between Winchester tower and Curfew tower.

A chamber, sixty feet long and twenty-eight broad, was laid out for himself. A chapel, seventy feet long and twenty-eight broad, was laid out for his patron saint. Ten feet of dignity were accorded to the canonized, ever the existing, monarch. A space, sufficient for a grass-plot, parted his chamber from the chapel. Near the king's chamber stood the queen's. Adjoining these rooms rose the new hall, called 'the great hall,' by way of distinction from the lesser hall built by Beauclerc in the upper ward.

That hall in the deserted quarter was required for works of charity. On Christmas day, Henry collected the poor of Windsor in his own house; on other holy days, his bailiffs were instructed to collect them in the ancient hall, where they were fed and clothed 'for the honour of God.' St. John's day, St. Stephen's day, and the Three Kings' day, were special festivals for the Windsor poor. Innocents' day was sacred to poor boys; St. Thomas' day to poor clerks and way-worn monks. The King's House was understood to be the poor man's refuge.

Opposite to the new King's House, Henry erected a lodging for his son, Prince Edward—first of the Edwards—in the great bastion leaning on the Norman keep. That lodging for the prince is still intact; the edifice known of old as the Constable's lodging, now occupied by the keeper of Her Majesty's Privy Purse. Here Edward lived for many years; he and his tutors, with his governors and their guards. Here he received his education in the liberal arts, before he entered on his great career in arms. Here he received that Count of Flanders who came to Windsor out of a desire to see the prodigy. His mother, Alinore of Provence, was extremely fond of

Windsor Castle, and at Windsor Castle in the Second King's House, some of her little ones were born.

Orders were given by Henry that the prince's chamber should be lined; that a floor should be flung across the adjoining turret, dividing the space into two stories; that the roof should be covered with lead, and that the windows should be barred with iron bars. Henry had once been frightened by a maniac, who had crept through a garden window into his bed-room. From that moment every window of his palaces had been barred.

The king's works at Windsor—like those at Westminster Abbey and the Tower—were stayed for want of means. Henry robbed the Jews and borrowed from the citizens; but he could never get enough to carry on his works. Masons and carpenters were in arrear. Canons and choristers murmured for their pay. Masons were lodged in jail; but Henry could hardly place the canons under lock and key in his Cole House—the prison which he built for common offenders in his outer gate. These creditors clamoured for their dues, and Henry, having no other means of raising money, pawned the Virgin of Windsor; an im-

portant idol, which had recently been added to the shrine. On pawning this idol, Henry prayed that his Holy Virgin might be kept by the money-lenders in a decent place. Though pledged for money, she was still a saint, and worthy of respect.

Simon de Montfort and Peter de Montfort were prisoners in the Castle during Henry's reign. Their prison lodging would be in the middle tower on the western wall, above the barbican, — the work now known as the Garter tower.

The western wall in the lower ward at Windsor bears a close resemblance to the western wall in the royal ward at the Tower of London. Built at the same time, and by the same man, they were both defensive works, in which the sovereign had to provide a prison for his rebels and his captives. In each the wall was thick and high, with rounded works in the angles, and a half-round work between them. Salisbury tower in Windsor corresponded to the Belfry tower in London, Garter tower in Windsor to Beauchamp tower in London, and Curfew tower in Windsor to Develin tower in London. Beauchamp tower was built for a prison; no doubt Garter tower was meant for a prison; a relief to the great keep

in which Robert de Mowbray had been forgotten and Maud de Braose had been starved to death.

A romantic visitor came to Windsor in the reign of Henry the Third in the person of Guy de Lusignan. The Lusignans were connexions of the wicked queen-mother, Elinor of Aquitaine ; and Lion Heart, her son, had set up Guy de Lusignan as king of Cyprus. Harassed by the Moslems, who were creeping through the plains and islets towards the Dardanelles, that family were praying for the help of France and England—aid which soon after Guy de Lusignan's visit to Windsor went to them in the persons of St. Louis and Edward Prince of Wales.

Lusignan was lodged in 'the tower towards the town ;' that is to say, the lodging in the south-west angle of the lower ward. The new work had as yet no name. For some time it was known as Guy de Lusignan's lodgings. Afterwards, as residence of the chancellor, it was known as Chancellor's tower ; a name which clings to it still, though the official name is Salisbury tower.

The Second King's House was hardly a success. Ledges of chalk gave way beneath the weight of walls and towers. Almoner's tower fell down. The curtain slipped into the ditch. Even the

King's House began to totter. Lightnings rent the edifice, and massive chimneys crumbled into dust. After a stormy night, in which the stacks came rattling down, Queen Alinore turned her eyes to the ruined, but yet safer site in the upper ward. Rooms were repaired for her in Beauclerc's house. A private chapel and a wardrobe, with a press for the queen's garments, were added to the older buildings. Henry soon followed his partner to that upper ward. The former king's chamber was restored, wainscoted and panelled for his use. Leaving the chapel to his saint, the Constable's lodging to his son, Henry of Winchester migrated to the upper ward. The second King's House had but a scanty lease of life.

CHAPTER XIV.

EDWARD OF CARNARVON.

1305–6.

On a hot summer day in 1305, Edward of Carnarvon, son of the great sovereign who had passed his youth in Constable's tower, rode into Windsor, under charge of Miles de Stapleton, one of the king's trusty officers. He was a prisoner of his father's wrath,—forbidden to approach the court, or quit the castle and the neighbouring park. He came alone, his household having been dispersed. The young man was accused of rioting in the streets, presuming on his rank, and using language to the king's chief minister unworthy of a prince.

At twenty-one, Edward of Carnarvon was a grown-up child. Although a man in size, he was a boy in conduct and in mind. Loved by his parents with a foolish doting, Edward had been set apart as prince, allowed to live alone and

keep a separate court. Surrounded from his cradle upwards by ushers, grooms, and watermen, he had learned to like low company and the pastimes of low company. Morris, his scullion, rode with him to hunt; James, his dancer, hung about his cabinet. Nothing tickled him so much as to see a slut caper on a table, and a yokel tumble from a horse. Jugglers were always at his beck. Though fond of music, his chief enjoyment was to push his fiddlers into a room and break their violins on their heads. Whisking aside his primer, he would call for a game at pitch-and-toss, and play against his usher, with his barber looking on. Losing his game, and having no money, he borrowed pennies from his barber to pay his debts. James enchanted him by a comic dance, and Morris amused him when riding out by rolling from his horse. Early in life, he had begun to drink and gamble, and to hold suspicious intercourse with drabs and thieves. That he had some relations with the brigand Weswyk, is clear; that these relations were not those of magistrate to criminal, is no less clear. He was suspected of a share in the great robbery at Westminster Abbey; and his connexion with that mystery has never been explained. A

prince, he was flattered and abused, and both the flattery and abuse wrought on his mind for evil. Heady and petulant, he could neither take reproof nor tolerate counsel; yet his father, in the one great blunder of his reign, had chosen for this giddy boy a comrade giddier, perter, and baser than himself.

Impetuous rulers, from the Cæsars down to the Plantagenets, had been fond of seeking in the lower grades of courtiers for companions to their sons. Edward Longshanks, though a cautious king, had found in Perot de Gaveston such a playmate, valet, and attendant as he thought would suit the prince his son.

Perot was the son of a ruined Gascon knight, who had been sentenced by his lord, the king of France, to death, but who had broken jail, and sought a refuge in the Norman camp. The wife of this Gascon traitor had been burnt to death for sorcery. But Philip's enemies were Edward's friends; and to reward the deserter, Edward had taken his youngster, Perot, into service, placing him as a valet, who could patter French, in the young prince's cabinet.

Edward believed that he was acting wisely for himself and for his son.

The Gascon lad was poor, his family of no account. What danger could arise from such a youngster sharing in Prince Edward's sports? He was not a Lacy—not a Warren—with a great connexion at his back. He must depend on Edward, and on Edward only; since the prince could make him by a smile and break him by a frown. Not so with playmates of exalted rank. In such a place of trust, a Lacy or a Warren might presume; ambition might be kindled, and the jealousy of rivals might be roused. Great lords were either married or expecting to be married to the prince's sisters and cousins; and the prince was not unlikely to be led beyond the lines of prudence, should he fall into the power of one who had a right to lead. Perot had no such right. A foreigner of lowly birth and broken fortune, he had no power to work for mischief; while a Bohun or a Clare, deriving from the royal blood, might, in a weak man's reign, presume so high as to overtop the crown. A lad like Perot, having neither estates, connexions, nor commands, could fill no higher place than that of a trusty servant and humble friend.

With these intentions, Perot had been given to Edward, who received the merry, impudent, and

graceless youngster to his heart. In no long time the king found reason to regret his choice; but not until the seeds of an unparalleled evil had been sown.

Perot de Gaveston was no ordinary lad. Vices he had in plenty; avarice, foppery, licentiousness —enough of each and all to have stained a nobler name than his; and all these vices of his country grew on him with years. But he had many talents and some virtues; grace and wit, science and courage; with a share of loyalty and honesty not often to be seen in courts. The lad was handsome, eloquent, and martial; sat his saddle like a prince, and bore his lance like a veteran. He was a fop, but in his foppery there was always taste. He was a satirist, but in his satire there was always point. He was rapacious; yet the money badly got was often wisely spent. His misery was that Edward made too much of him, treating him as a friend and equal, while he kept the proudest nobles in the land at bay. Pembroke and Lacy had no wit. Warwick and Bohun had no taste in dress. To such men, birth was rank, and rank the only passage into courts. These barons could not bear to see the well-dressed, brisk, and mocking varlet near their prince. Had Perot been less

witty, graceful, soldierly, he might have found in them more lenient critics. He was hated by the barons; but the prince, his master, saw that he was hated for his talents even more than for his faults.

The charge on which Edward of Carnarvon was confined to Windsor Castle and the neighbouring park, was not his first offence. Some time ago, he and his minion, Perot, sallying out at night, had broken into Bishop Langton's park, pulled down his palings, driven away his keepers, and begun to shoot his deer. But they had found their match in the old bishop. Falling on them with his men, Langton had taken them in the fact, breaking the king's peace, and he had put them under ward. In vain the prince had raged, the varlet threatened. Langton, a minister of state, had marched his prisoners to the royal presence, where the king, in a great burst of passion, had compelled his son to sue for peace, implore the bishop's pardon, and promise to amend his life. Promises were easy, but, unhappily, he had not reformed. Gilbert de Clare, his cousin, had been placed beside him, in the hope of weaning him from low company; but Madame de Gaveston's son had proved a stronger man than Joan Plantagenet's son. Gilbert, instead

of saving the prince, had himself fallen under Perot's spells.

Like all his nation, Perot was fond of jugglers, mimics, singers, and such motley crews. Comedians, happy in his favour, hung on the fringe of Edward's court, ready to obey their patron and amuse the prince. Perot taught his companions to neglect their studies and increase their debts. Italian money-dealers were at hand, ready to advance more ducats on the prince's bond. Riot succeeded riot. When the prelate, who had been a witness of the prince's promise to amend, reproved the Gascon for his evil doings, Edward, that Gascon's master, broke into such gross and filthy speeches, that the venerable bishop was compelled to lay his injuries before the king once more.

A summons, not to be evaded, called the offending prince to court.

A grave and aged councillor, Walter de Langton, had borne for many years the burthen of great affairs in church and state. For ten years he had filled with credit the see of Lichfield and Coventry ; a diocese which then included Chester, and in public documents was called the see of Chester. Once, indeed, his credit in the Church

had been assailed. Boniface, listening to a scandalous story, had suspended him from his sacred office ; but the tale was false ; and on a statement from the king, his holiness recalled his censure, and restored the bishop to his rank. Among his lay appointments, Langton held the posts of first councillor and royal treasurer. Confiding in his wisdom and experience, Edward had employed him in his most important business. Not in court and council only, but in foreign countries, Edward had found him useful. Knowing Edward's mind more perfectly than any other man, Langton had been sent abroad on special embassy to treat of peace. He had been named as one of the umpires in the great contention of Bruce and Baliol for the Scottish crown. He acted as collector of the tenths for Palestine. In fact, if not in name, he was prime minister of England, the most eminent and powerful servant of the crown.

The king was staying at Cowdray Castle, and on Sunday, June 13, the prince was at his gates. Edward refused to see his son. Next day a court was held and judgment given. The prince was banished from his father's house. Neither he nor any of his suite were to approach the royal court. No member of the royal family was to see him,

feed him, lodge him, or support him. Edward intended that after so much riot his son should fast. Neither from the household nor from the exchequer should supplies be sent to him. An act of penance was imposed.

Gilbert was removed from his councils, and Perot separated from his cabinet.

For five weeks Edward of Carnarvon, in a humble guise and with a broken spirit, followed on his father's movements,—hanging in his wake, and hoping to be called, but not presuming to show his face. Except his sisters, no one dared to pity him, much less to help him ; for the king was swift and terrible in his ire. One of his sisters, Mary the Nun, broke silence, but the prince was too much frightened to accept her invitation to come and see her. At the end of five weeks, he was ordered by the king to Windsor Castle, where he was confined to the King's House and the neighbouring park, till the royal pleasure should be further shown.

His personal attendants were reduced to two; John de Weston, his seneschal, and John de Hansted, his valet. He implored his sisters to engage the queen's good offices with his father, that Perot and Gilbert might be allowed to keep him com-

pany. The king restored some members of his suite, including Reynolds, the son of a Windsor baker, whom the young man afterwards made his primate and chancellor; but Perot and Gilbert, though they had been the partners of his sin, were not allowed to share his acts of penance.

Comic and puerile was this act of penance in the royal house and the adjacent park. The prince was put on spare diet; yet rather as a man than as a boy. Strong meats and drinks were put away, as fiddlers and buffoons were driven away; but he was fed on tart and jam, as much as he could eat. Neither venison nor claret was allowed; but he had plenty of currants, dates, and figs. Fish was his usual food; and with his bread and fish he had abundance of pickles, powdered cinnamon, and sauce. Raisins and jellies were supplied, with almonds, sugar, rice, and candied orange. When he hankered after stronger food—a side of venison or a keg of claret—he had to beg the dainty from a friend, and get the smuggled article into the gates by stealth.

Six months elapsed before the king gave way, and suffered his relenting son to show his face. Even then he only yielded to events. At sixty-seven the great man's fighting power was almost

spent. Yet he had French and Scottish wars on hand. Money was wanted for these wars. By knighting his son, the king could raise a fund; but he could hardly knight his son while he was lying at Windsor Castle in disgrace. The prince, now broken to his dates and jam, was ready to submit. Tired of restraint and ginger-bread, he showed his willingness to accept his father's terms —to beg the bishop's pardon, and engage to live a chaster life.

CHAPTER XV.

PEROT DE GAVESTON.

1307–8.

Softened by the prince's meekness, Langton overlooked his wrongs. The prince was freed from Windsor, and the royal warrior, harassed by many cares, imagined that his minister and his son were reconciled at last.

Edward of Carnarvon was knighted by his father, and invested with the duchy of Guienne. To some extent he was associated in the exercise of regal power, the king believing that his discipline at Windsor Castle had completely done his work. Commands were offered to the prince. For several weeks father and son were in accord, and the fast-failing warrior hoped that his once graceless boy had left the vices and frivolities of the past behind.

Langton was at the height of power. On start-

ing for the north, the king named two guardians of his kingdom—Grenfield, archbishop of York, and Langton, bishop of Lichfield. Grenfield lived in York, and Langton had the undivided government in the south. All power was in his hands. At Lanercost the king was startled—by a sharp attack of sickness—into a desire to set his house in order:—first, as to his soul, by sending presents to the shrine of Compostella; second, as to his realm, by summoning a meeting of his parliament in the frontier city of Carlisle. To Langton these affairs were given in charge; and after forwarding the royal gifts to Santiago, that prelate came to court, in order to receive the king's command about the coming parliament. Two commissioners were named to open and direct the great assembly. Langton stood first, and Lacy second. Lacy, earl of Lincoln, was a close connexion of the reigning house; his daughter, Alice, being the wife of Thomas Plantagenet, earl of Lancaster, the king's nephew, and failing the king's issue, heir to the English crown. No post, and no association, seemed too high for Langton; and a prince like Edward, doubtful of the king's support, had reason to remain in friendship with so strong a minister of state.

But Edward of Carnarvon was a petulant fellow, guided by the laughs and hints of his nimble-witted valet. Leaving Windsor Castle, in his new rank as duke of Guienne, he sent for Perot, and, without his father's leave, restored him to his place. No Gilbert de Clare was near him now, to share and moderate the Gascon's rule. Regarding Perot as a martyr in his cause, the prince desired to raise him in a striking way; and having got the duchy of Guienne assigned to him, he fancied he could make the Gascon lad a count. But no one listened to his voice. The king, as all men knew, retained his sovereign right; the king alone, as all men knew, could grant such titles; and the king, as all men knew, detested the unworthy minion of his son. No councillor dared to mention such a grant, and least of all the prince himself. He turned to Langton. If the minister would prefer his suit, the thing might be achieved. What Perot wanted was no trifle; for the rank he craved was nothing less than the countship of Ponthieu, one of the greatest seigniories in France!

One day, the prince accosted Langton in the ante-room. Well? He begged a favour from the bishop. Yes; what favour? He explained his wish. At first the minister stared in wonder.

Count de Ponthieu, one of the dignities of a prince! He dared not mention such a thing, he said, in either cabinet or council. But the prince insisted that he should go in and try. The king, he said, would listen to his voice. But Langton still held out. Perot a count—and Count de Ponthieu! No man, save the prince himself, could safely ask the king for such a grant. But, being pressed still more, the minister said he might name it to his highness, not as from himself, but from the prince. Edward assented, and the minister went in.

'My lord king,' said Langton, going forward, 'I am here—unwillingly, as I take the living God to witness for me—on the part of my lord prince, your son. He wants to have the rank of Count de Ponthieu conferred on Perot de Gaveston, his bachelor, if such a thing may be done with your consent.'

As fire to flax was this announcement to the king. Rising in his wrath, the aged warrior roared out:

'By the living God, who art thou, man, that darest to speak of such a thing? But for the fear of God, and thy assurance that thou art no willing agent in this business, I should use thee roughly. Stand aside. Let him come in who

sent thee. I will hear what he can say. Remain while he is here, and listen to my words.'

The prince, still waiting at the door, was called inside.

'What is the business thou hast sent this man to ask?'

'That Perot de Gaveston may be made, with your consent, Count de Ponthieu.'

In a fury, like the rage of battle, the aged sovereign rose from his seat, sprang on his son, and catching him by the hair, lugged him up and down the cabinet, exclaiming in the intervals of his wrath:

'Out! thou son of a false mother! Thou wouldst give away lands! Thou who hast never won a rod! God alive, man, but that the realm might come to anarchy, I would take such care that thou shouldst never wear my crown!'

The king, in his great passion, tore the young man's hair, which came out from the roots. When he had spent his rage, he hurled the prince into a corner, and turning to bishop Langton, bade him convene a council on the spot. Barons and prelates soon appeared, and after hearing the king express his anger on the subject, they considered what had best be done. Perot was called before

the board, and told to swear on the gospels that, whether the king were dead or living, he would accept no gift of lands from the hands of Edward of Carnarvon. Perot made oath, as he was told to do. An order for his banishment was read to him. He was to quit the realm for Gascony, and never to set foot again on English soil — on penalty of his life. A second oath was taken, that he would go away, and not return to England, even though the king should die. He was compelled to swear. Perot was then led away, put on board a ship, and landed on the French coast. Next came the prince's turn. To every part of these arrangements he was asked to yield a full and free consent. The prince submitted to his fate. Few things were awful in his eyes, but of these few his father's anger was the chief. With lying lip he swore that he would neither ask his favourite to return, nor grace him with the gift of either title or estate.

Yet, after the old warrior's death, this perjured prince recalled his favourite from abroad; recalling him, not as Perot de Gaveston, not as Perot, count de Ponthieu, but as Perot, earl of Cornwall!

Cornwall was a royal earldom. Since the Conqueror's reign, this dignity had been always held

by a royal prince, a member of the reigning house. Robert, first earl, was half-brother to the king. Edmund, seventh earl, was grandson of King John. Edmund was lately dead, and many a royal prince was pining for the vacant title and unoccupied domains. Some of the lands belonging to this royal earldom lay near Windsor Castle, and included Burnham woods.

Langton urged on the young king the wisdom and piety of keeping to his princely oath. Lancaster, the king's first cousin, and Hereford, his sister's husband, warned him against receiving Perot: the son of a French traitor and a French witch; not only as a man unfit for his society, but as a villain who might act on him by spells to the destruction of his life. But Edward of Carnarvon gave no ear to his wise counsellors. His passion for the Gascon exile was the frenzy of a bad woman for a man; a craze like that of Queen Isabel for Mortimer, and of Queen Mary for Chastelard; a craze beyond the reach of warning and reproof. Perot came back to Windsor Castle as earl of Cornwall; and when Edward of Carnarvon sailed from Dover to meet his bride, Isabel de France, he made this foreign favourite the guardian of his realm.

Langton, as an enemy of Perot, was removed from the council-board, and flung into a dungeon of the Norman keep. Perot, constable of Windsor and guardian of England, raised his banner over Langton's head, where it continued floating in audacious triumph, till his staff was broken by his newest rival in the king's affections, Madame Isabel de France.

CHAPTER XVI.

ISABEL DE FRANCE.

1312–27.

In birth and family connexion, Isabel de France, consort of Edward of Carnarvon, and mother of his splendid son, Edward of Windsor, was the noblest lady ever won for consort by an English prince. Royal on every side, Isabel was daughter of a king, sister of a king, cousin of a king, wife of a king, mother of a king. Her female relatives, like her male, were sovereigns. Juana, her mother, was queen of Navarre in her own right. Her sister Marguerite was queen of Castile. Three of her brothers wore the crown of France. One of her uncles was duke of Burgundy, a second king of Hungary, a third emperor of Germany. Madame Isabel was no less beautiful in face and form than she was high in birth and strong in kinship. In her own capital and country, she was known as Isabel the Fair.

In truth, the beauty of her family was recognised by all the world. Her father had borne the name of Philippe le Bel; her brother Charles bore the name of Charles le Bel. Her taste in dress, her sprightliness of wit, her charm of manner, were as much her own, as the exceeding beauty of her face. A spell lay in her smile, and every one on whom she cast an eye became her slave. But Isabel, before she had been at Windsor Castle for a year, appealed to deeper sympathies than a lovely face can reach. She took the attitude of a neglected wife.

A princess, lovely and yet injured, is an object that will never fail to call in help. Her life, since coming into England, had been one long drama of intrigue and misery; but at length, the insolent favourite who had injured her so deeply had been murdered by her friends, and in her cause, if not by her command. She made no secret of her full approval of their deed.

If ever execution of a state offender called for stern—yet just—inquiry, that of Perot de Gaveston called for one. He had been murdered in the coolest blood. Surrendering on a pledge of safety, he had seen that promise broken in his teeth. Guilty or innocent, Perot had a right to trial;

but no court was ever called to hear the charge and to consider his defence. If low in origin, he had been raised into the rank of peers, and at the time of his murder was the actual husband of the king's niece, Margaret de Clare. For five years he had worn the coronet of an English earl. During that long period he had sat in council and commanded armies in the field. Yet he was slain by Lancaster and Warwick with as little decency as might be shown in killing a houseless dog. No doubt, the license of his tongue, the fashion of his doublet, had been galling to these lords; but murder was a savage penalty for calling Warwick the Black Dog of Ardennes, and outdoing Lancaster in the fopperies of dress.

In truth, the minion's faults lay deeper than a mocking tongue and braided coat. He showed great talent for affairs. When left in Scotland, he had moved his troops with skill enough to rouse the envy of experienced captains; and when sent to Ireland, he had won the natives so completely, that his name was held in honour to the times of Lord Montjoy.

Driven mad by the red-handed slaughter of his minion, the king was about to quit the royal house, and plunge his country into civil war, when

his consort, Queen Isabel, after hearing Sunday mass in St. Edward's chapel, took to her room, and on the following day presented England with a long-expected prince.

That Monday was the feast of St. Brice of Tours, a saint enjoying high repute not only in England, but in France. At forty minutes after five on that auspicious morning Edward of Windsor came into the world in which he was to play so great a part. His father's rage was turned aside. A girl so born might not have kept his wrath in check, but in the boy now given to him he read the future history of his line. The child became his favourite, and in this new affection he appeared to have forgotten the minion he had lost. This favourite of a moment was the only fancy of his heart that brought on him no public shame.

As soon as Edward of Windsor saw the light, his mother, Isabel, aware of the affection felt for her by the London people, sent a messenger from Windsor to the city with intelligence of the young prince's birth:

'Because we believe that you will hail this news with joy, we send you word that our Lord, by His grace, hath given us a son . . . God have you in his love.'

Queen Isabel's messenger was slow of foot, but news so great runs fast, and Chepe was loud in revel when the man arrived ; bells pealing, dancers threading, singers carolling, and conduits running wine. The prince just born was hailed with rapture by the citizens as a ray of hope in a tempestuous night.

Three days later, the child was taken from the royal house into St. Edward's chapel, where Arnaldo, cardinal of Santa Prisca, and a group of princes and prelates, were assembled for his christening. He received the name of Edward, from the Saxon saint. Louis, the queen's uncle, and one of the sponsors, wished to give him the name of Louis, from the Gallic saint ; but he was overruled by the English councillors ; for neither king nor people could endure that foreign name. The reigning family still clung with fervour to the royal saint who had presented them with the English crown ; whilst the commoners, forgetting who had called them in, connected with the name of Louis the most recent landing of the French on English soil.

Not only mayor and citizen, but knight and baron, hailed in Edward of Windsor a sign of peace. Even in his cradle, he was like a star. The

king, immersed in his new cares, forgot his gloom; finding no leisure to indulge his fury at the murder of his friend. At Isabel's request, he took the chief offenders in that tragedy to his heart, signing with them an act of oblivion, which was meant, on his side and on theirs, to cover up the past. For Edward of Windsor's sake, the king had need of peace.

Had the unlucky king but kept the spirit of his pledge, seeking no other favourites than his wife and child, he might have spared that wife a load of shame, that child a thousand miseries, and himself a cruel death; but he was hardly freed from the spells of Perot de Gaveston ere he fell into the thrall of Hugh le Despencer; a man of higher birth, but far less charm and talent than the Gascon adventurer. The second minion took possession of the vacant place, and, coming between the king and queen, as Perot had done before him, Despencer roused in Queen Isabel's heart the jealousy and the madness of an outraged wife.

As yet, the queen was pure and loyal, and the spirit in which she fought against these favourites brought to her side a host of friends. But Isabel was a child of France. When stung by

insult, she could go all lengths. She fell in that bad school from good to bad, from bad to worse, until, in cunning and deceit, as well as in despatch and violence, she matched the women who were thought to be a pure monopoly of Italian soil. 'She-wolf of France,' was soon to be her name; but for a time she kept her game so close, that she was still regarded by the multitude as a suffering queen. Long after her connexion with Roger de Mortimer paid the king's neglect of her in kind, the citizens of London were devoted to her name and cause.

Her fall was brought on by the second favourite. Despencer married the king's niece, Lady Elinor de Clare, sister of Perot de Gaveston's wife. Through Lady Elinor de Clare, Despencer got some fortresses and manors in the march of Wales, which led him into quarrels with the old border family of Mortimer, who had ruled that country since the Norman conquest. Words were followed up by raids, in the rough border fashion. Roger de Mortimer, a son of the reigning chieftain, fell by accident into his enemy's hands, and as Despencer ruled the king and council, Mortimer was treated as a public enemy, and conducted to the Tower.

Queen Isabel was living at the Tower with her son, prince Edward, then a little child. Roger contrived to get the story of his wrongs conveyed to her apartments. In a luckless hour she saw him, and received the story from his lips. Bold, handsome, and impetuous, full of strength and enterprise, Roger de Mortimer appeared to Isabel the highest model of a man. She was already parted from the king, though they had not yet come to open rupture, and the world knew little of her secret miseries. She was dazzled by the border chief. Her heart was sore. She needed friends, and any man who was an enemy of Despencer turned her friend. Emboldened by her looks, the prisoner spoke of love ; for nothing was too daring for his lawless tongue. She listened to his words, in which pity for her estate was mixed with passion for herself. All words of love had long been strange to Isabel's ear, yet they came back on her with the ancient fire and force. She listened and was lost. From that hour Isabel's heart was warped, her purity soiled, her character gone.

The beautiful and royal girl so thrown away by a fantastic king was only twenty-six years old.

After her lapse from virtue, came, in quick and

dark succession, with the ebb and flow of victory on either side, the fight at Boroughbridge, the overthrow of Isabel's friends, and the execution of her champion, Thomas, earl of Lancaster. Unable to help her friends, except by prayer, Queen Isabel spent her time in visiting holy shrines, especially the shrines of native saints. Francis de Aldham, one of her sturdy knights, was brought in chains to Windsor, where the king commanded him to be hung and drawn; hung for felony to please his minion, drawn for treason to gratify himself.

But he was heaping coals of fire on his unwitting head.

Roger de Mortimer, though still a prisoner in the Tower, contrived a scheme for seizing Wallingford and Windsor. Isabel was with him, heart and soul; and she could help him all the more by hiding from every one her guilty love, and going back to join her husband at his court. But Windsor, as of old, was faithful to the actual king. Wallingford fell, but Windsor, under the command of Oliver de Bordeaux, repelled the attacks of Mortimer's friends, supported by the queen. Baffled in his design, Roger escaped from the Tower and crossed the sea to France; where Isabel, throwing off her thinly-worn disguise of

conjugal duty, went to join him, and contrived to have her son, the Prince of Wales, sent after her to Paris, on pretence of his doing homage to her brother for his duchy of Guienne.

Edward of Carnarvon begged her to return. If she would not return herself, he urged her to send back his son, the Prince of Wales. He prayed, he raved, he wept — but Isabel put him off with words. He knew that Isabel had dishonoured him by her intrigue with Mortimer ; but he begged her to return and be forgiven. She told him, he must first give up his masculine favourite. He refused ; and she prepared to cross the sea, and put that favourite down by force. A fleet was silently prepared.

The king was with Despencer, living in the royal house, hunting in the royal forest, and allowing his abandoned favourite to rule and reign. The end was nigh. On Isabel landing with her son, the Prince of Wales, all England rose against the favourite ; and the king, unable to defend his minion, had to share his fall, and in the end his fate.

Despencer was hung and drawn at Hereford, just as Isabel's adherent, Aldham, had been hung and drawn at Windsor. Edward, now discrowned,

was hurried, under Roger de Mortimer's orders, from his prison at Kenilworth to Berkeley castle, where he was speedily done to death.

Queen Isabel, in the name of her son, Edward of Windsor, took possession of the realm.

The boy was fourteen years of age.

CHAPTER XVII.

EDWARD OF WINDSOR.

1329–33.

EDWARD OF WINDSOR is the greatest figure in connexion with this royal edifice. Windsor Castle was the place of his birth and of his christening; the home of his married love; the birthplace of three of his children; the scene of his gallant son's marriage, and of his pious consort's death. At Windsor the hero of Crécy kept his state; to Windsor he brought his royal and illustrious prisoners; in Windsor he revived the Round Table of King Arthur, and established the Society of St. George. To the edifices on the royal hill he added the Third King's House, and in the lower ward he built a chapel to the Syrian saint. Windsor was the centre and the record of his glorious reign.

In the third year of his kingship, in the seventeenth year of his life, Edward came to Windsor,

riding by his mother's side, and in the company of his fair young wife.

A finer lad than Edward of Windsor at the age of seventeen years was hardly to be seen on earth. Tall, firmly-knit, and finely grown, he was a man in height and strength. From childhood he had been afield, tearing after hawk and hound, living in the sun, and sometimes tented in the camp. No archer of his guard could bend a longer bow; no baron in his court could wield a heavier axe. Already he had fleshed his sword; and men who knew the trade of war foresaw in him the hero of a hundred fights. 'Show me the enemy,' was his motto. 'Let those who love me follow me,' was his cry. No spirit of hanging back was in his nature. As a king, his place was in the front; even in his early march on Stanhope Park, his lords had something like a foretaste of Halidon, Sluys, and Crécy.

Yet the lad was far from ranking as a fighting prince, and nothing else, like Lion Heart. No love of war inflamed his heart; but when he had to strike a blow, he struck that blow with all his might. In truth, he was a student, and in time a ripe one, conversant with laws and letters, as with tongues and men. Aungerville, his tutor, was a

wit, a writer, a divine, well grounded in the liberal arts. From him the prince acquired his love of books. Latin he learned from this divine. English and French he spoke from his cradle upwards; Spanish and German were familiar to his lips. For a boy of seventeen, he had seen a good deal of the world. Few boys had ridden through the English shires so much. He knew the Scottish borders; he had spent some time in France and Flanders. Bordeaux, Paris, and Valenciennes were known to him, and he had mixed in the society of many kings and queens.

To crown his gifts of fortune, he was happy in his love. Many and dazzling were the brides proposed for him while he was only prince,—the female youth and loveliness of France, Navarre, and Spain. But he had chosen for himself, and taken as his queen the lady of his heart.

This girl, Philippa of Hainault, was the eldest daughter of William the Good, count of Holland, Zeeland, Friesland, and Hainault. Edward had seen her, at the age of thirteen, in her father's court at Valenciennes—a tall, fair girl, with flesh all creamy white, and cheeks all rosy red. A few months older than herself, he led her in the ways of love, giving up for her his hardy sports—his shooting with the

bow, his riding after hawk and hound. For her bright eyes he lingered in the house, and passed his morning hours in gazing up into her face. The girl was far from loth; and when they parted company in Valenciennes they were deep in love—so deep, that neither time nor distance led to any change of mind. As soon as he was crowned, King Edward asked her hand in marriage; and before the year was out, Edward and Philippa were man and wife.

Young, loving, wedded, and a king, what earthly blessing had the boy of seventeen years to seek?

Despite his youth and love, his health and rank, Edward was living at Windsor Castle in the shadow of a fearsome mystery.

Sixteen months ago his father had been done to death at Berkeley castle. He was then at Lincoln, busy with preparations for his marriage-rite; a work in which his mother and her paramour, Roger de Mortimer, engaged his time and thought. Edward was his father. He had steadfastly refused the crown until his father had resigned it in his favour. In vain his judges had found him law for violating law, in vain his bishops had preached to him that crime was virtue. He had steadily

refused to take his father's crown by force. The queen and her ferocious lover had to labour in the dark. The deed at Berkeley castle was concealed from him. Weeks elapsed before the king became aware that his father had been slain. He knew it now; but even now he had not come to see that the guilty persons were his mother and her nearest councillor—that border chief who was about him day and night.

Agents arrived at Windsor from the king of France, requiring Edward to cross the sea, and do his homage for the duchy of Guienne.

These agents came to Windsor Castle in consequence of Isabel's intrigues.

Death had been very busy in the court of France. In fifteen years no less than five kings of France had passed away—Philippe, Louis, Jean, Philippe, and Charles. The death of Charles left Isabel the next in order of succession; but the feudal system was unfavourable to female rights; and Isabel's cousin, Philippe de Valois, as the next heir male, was chosen in her place. A powerful section of the French nobility was in favour of Isabel, in the person of her son, Edward of Windsor. Though a woman could not reign, the doctrine was allowed by lawyers, that a female might *trans-*

mit her right. But Philippe, by a private offer, had induced his cousin Isabel to forego her claim, and send her son to France in proof of his submission as a vassal prince. The bribe he offered to his cousin Isabel was a double marriage—first, between his son, Jean, now dauphin, and her daughter, Lady Elinor; second, between his daughter, Madame Marie de Valois, and her younger son, John of Eltham. Philippe gained his point, and Isabel sent the king, her son, to France; not seeing, in the blindness of her passion, the danger of letting so bright a lad as Edward go among a people who were all but sure to tell him of the scandals of her life.

Leaving his young wife at Windsor, Edward sailed for France.

On his return to Windsor Castle, Edward was another man. A few days in the court of Philippe had converted a joyous English lad into a dark and brooding man. At seventeen he was sinking under his load of care. Strange words had crept into his ear—so strange that he refused to give them lodging in his heart. The queen, his mother, was accused of crimes almost beyond the depth of words—of living with a paramour in open shame; of sharing with the reprobate in her husband's

murder; and of plotting to deprive her son of his inheritance in the crown of France!

Moody and depressed, the young king moved about, seeking in change of residence relief from his over-burthened thoughts. The birth at Woodstock of his son, afterwards so renowned as the Black Prince, shot rays of light through the surrounding gloom. But soon the fearful night came back. His mother an abandoned woman —living in public shame—with hands imbrued in his father's blood! No evidence but that of his own eyes and ears could move him into action; but such evidence of eyes and ears was offered him at Nottingham castle, in the ante-room and bedroom of the guilty queen. Then his impatient and implacable justice swept the offenders from his sight. Mortimer was hung at Tyburn. 'Spare him, my sweet son! He is my dearest friend!' cried the despairing woman. But the boy was like a god—immovable in the path of law and right.

Edward was at Windsor with his consort when he took into his hands the reins of power, dismissed his mother's ministers from place, and drove her creatures from his court.

To Isabel, such justice could not easily be meted out: she was his mother—sunk into a

slough of sin—but she had once been pure and good, and Nature pleaded for her in his heart. She could no longer live at court; she must retire from public sight; away from the company of his wife and child. A safe retreat was found for her. On a ridge of sand and mud, blown inward from the Wash, a fortress had been built called Castle Rising; and this lonely fortress, raised against pirates and marauders, was assigned to Isabel as a penitential home. Three or four women were allowed her as companions, and the rest of her attendants were the neighbouring nuns. Thither the guilty woman was conveyed. She lived for seven-and-twenty years; heard in her cell of Crécy and Poictiers; received a yearly visit from the king, her son; and, dying in old age and peace, was laid in her resting-place at Grey Friars' church, in the penitential garments of a nun.

Windsor and Woodstock were the favourite houses of King Edward and Queen Philippa, now at peace with their own people, though disturbed from time to time by rumours from the north. Their son, Edward of Woodstock, grew in loveliness. Philippa nursed her hero. A winsome picture was that mother and her boy—the queen so young and fair, the prince so bright and strong!

Many a poor monkish artist made that group the model for his pictures of the Virgin and her Child.

From Windsor Castle Edward rode into the north, and measured swords against the Scottish king; fought the stout fight of Halidon Hill; and having proved his prowess in the field, returned to Windsor Castle, flushed with victory—bringing in his train the dashing fugitive, Robert Count d'Artois, brother-in-law and mortal enemy of Philippe de Valois, king of France.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CRECY.

1333–46.

EDWARD'S new guest at Windsor, Robert, Count d'Artois, was, for king and kingdom, the most dangerous person ever yet received into the royal house. A hero, with a grievance and a romance, he had come to Windsor Castle for no other end than that of stirring up hate and strife.

Prince of the blood, descending from the father of St. Louis, Artois was a bitter enemy of his dynasty and country; but his friendship for King Edward, his devotion to the English cause, were more disastrous to the land of his adoption than his hatred of King Philippe, and his treason to his country, were injurious to his native land. To Robert d'Artois we owe our long and desolating wars with France — wars which began when Edward of Windsor was twenty-five and lasted

until Mary Tudor was forty-one—a period, counting from King Edward's entrance into Antwerp down to Mary's loss of Calais, of two hundred and twenty years. Crécy, Poictiers, Agincourt, light up the page with meteoric fires; yet nearly all that energy was cast into the sea, and hurled against the adamantine rock.

Artois, a near connexion of the queen, was also a more distant kinsman of the king. His father was Queen Philippa's first cousin, and his consort was her aunt. Through Isabel, he was connected with the king, her son. But he had other claims, as courtier and as soldier, on a prince just flushed with his first victory in the field. Artois, a fighting man, came of a crusading and chivalric race. No count of Artois, since the dignity was first conferred by Louis on his son, had ever died in bed. The first count was killed at Massova, the second at Courtrai, the third at Furnae. Robert, fourth of the line, was now at Windsor Castle, pleading for a warrior's chance of fame or death. So red a record was unusual, even among royal princes, and the king's heart warmed to Artois, as a master in the game of war.

Artois had a grievance to redress—an insult to avenge.

While he was yet a boy Philippe the Tall had taken his duchy from him, and bestowed it on his aunt, Mahaut, countess of Burgundy. Mahaut had an only child, a girl named Jeanne, and Philippe the Tall had married that Jeanne, in order that he might add her provinces to his crown. Mahaut had asked for Artois, on the ground that her father had left that county to her, excluding Robert, her brother's son. Philippe sustained her claim, since what was given to her must come to him as husband of her child. Assisted by the bishop of Arras, and by his 'niece,' a woman named Divion, Mahaut produced a will or charter, which she registered in the court. Artois and Burgundy were united to the crown of France.

As soon as he could wield a sword the young count Robert appealed to arms. Philippe, unable to put him down by force, consented to a compromise. The young man was to yield in form, the unjust verdict was to be reversed, and the inheritance of his father was to be restored. But after Robert had given up his arms, Philippe put him off with words, kept him about his person while the suit was going on, and on a second verdict being recorded in the queen's favour, held the disputed country in his consort's name. Charles, called

the Fair, proved equally unjust. Then Robert threw himself into the arms of Philippe de Valois, married that prince's sister Jeanne, and soon became the soul and sword of his brother-in-law's party at the court of France. Philippe's cause was like his own —male right against female right. By Artois' help, Philippe was carried to the throne.

Yet Philippe de Valois in his turn had put him off with words; hinting that he might try the courts, and meet his adversary's proofs with counter-proofs. Had the old count, his grandfather, left his county to the female heir? Mahaut and the bishop of Arras were no more, but Divion, the bishop's female scribe, was still alive, with all the bishop's documents in her hands. Mahaut had tried to get them from her; but the crafty woman kept his principal papers under lock and key. Jeanne, Artois' consort, went to Divion, who laid two documents before her: first, a charter by the old Count Robert, giving the county to his grandson; second, a draft of letter, written, but never sent, by the dead bishop, craving Count Robert's pardon for his sin in having stolen that document.

These papers, sustained by fifty witnesses, were produced in court. Philippe opposed the suit, de-

nounced the two documents as forgeries, arrested the woman Divion, and racked her till she signed a full confession, and then burnt her out of reach. Divion gone, Artois was accused of aiding that woman to poison his aunt Mahaut! Fearing for his life, he fled to the court of Jean the Pacific, duke of Brabant. Next, he was accused of trying to kill the king by means of sorcery and poison. Jeanne, his wife, and Jean, his infant son, were flung into prison; Philippe affecting to believe that his own sister had helped to forge the bishop's letter and the count's will. No longer feeling safe in Flanders, Artois put on a merchant's clothes, and taking passage in a smack, crossed over to the English coast and sought at Windsor an asylum from his enemy the king of France.

The first step towards Crécy was taken when the king received this fugitive at Windsor Castle.

Artois now took up the side of female rights. He told his English host that through his mother, Isabel, he was the true king of France; king by as good a title as he held in England. Under feudal law, a female might hand down a right, which from her sex she could not hold in her own person. Isabel could not claim the crown of France, not being a man; but Edward, as her

son, and Philippe the Fair's grandson, was the next male heir. Usage and law were on his side. France, too, was on his side. Philippe de Valois was a rebel and usurper, who had seized King Edward's crown, and who would fall before him when he marched on Paris to assume his own.

Dazzled by this splendid vision, Edward began to shape his plans for war. Agents were employed in divers towns, from Antwerp to Cologne—with divers personages, from Ludwig, emperor of Germany, down to Arteveldt, brewer of Ghent. Philippe, on his side, met these measures, by fomenting troubles on the western marches and raids on the Scottish borders. The affair at Cadsand gave the Flemish knights a taste of English pluck ; and the great fight off Sluys gave Edward his supremacy at sea.

The king was with his transports at the opening of the Scheldt, not dreaming of a naval action. Lady Isabella, his daughter, and her troop of damsels were on board. Five hundred sail stood out across his path : five hundred war ships barring the passage of three hundred transport ships. The French fleet had forty thousand Genoese and Norman soldiers on board. 'What are they ?' asked the English king. 'The French fleet which burned South-

ampton,' answered his captain. Like a mine, the the king sprang up in fire :

'Ha, I have long wished to meet them. By the help of God and St. George, we'll fight them!'

To this cry of God and St. George, the English cogs went at the French war ships, and in less than five hours' steady fighting the whole French fleet was scattered and destroyed. One French admiral was killed; the other, who escaped the fight, was hanged by his exasperated sovereign. England and St. George were rulers of the straits.

At Vannes the restless Artois met his death. From Vannes to Crécy was a single march. Once only in the war a truce was signed, a short, deceptive truce, which neither Edward nor his adversary meant to keep.

Edward returned from Normandy to Windsor with a fancy in his mind—for Edward was a man of fancies, passions, and ideas—with a project that might draw into his camp, and grapple to his person, many of those knights—native and volunteer—whose prowess he had proved in actual war.

The feudal principle was dying out ; the knightly principle was springing up; the new principle of free association proving stronger than either of the old principles of loyalty and fear.

No cohesive force then known exceeded that of the voluntary orders—such as the Hospitallers and Teutonic knights. Edward was dreaming of an order, which, unlike those priestly orders, should be secular in spirit and in object; and in which the members should be knights untrammelled by religious vows.

Windsor Castle was the natural home of a society of secular and military knights.

Old legends placed the seat and court of Arthur on the Castle hill and by the winding shore. The Norman keep supplied King Edward with the edifice for a round table, since the pile was circular, with an open gallery on the inner wall. Seated against the wall and looking towards each other, two or three hundred knights could sit down to a common feast.

Lancaster and Warwick, Chandos and Holland, were invited to assume the chairs of Tristram and Lancelot, Gareth and Bors. This table had a great success. Knights from Flanders, knights from Aquitaine, came in. By day they jousted in the upper ward; at night they feasted in the Norman keep. Chandos and Warwick were conspicuous in these bouts. Near them came the prince, though the future hero of Crécy was still

a boy. One sport, called hastiludes, was no less dangerous than war itself. In one of these bouts the gallant Salisbury lost his life.

Twice, if not thrice, these yearly jousts were held at Windsor. After the truce with France expired, Edward set sail for Normandy once more, leaving his queen and court at Windsor Castle. Here Queen Philippa remained, and hither came to her the tidings of her husband's march through France, the landing of his troops, the knighting of her son, the dash on Caen, the capture of Raoul Count d'Eu, the famous Constable of France. Afterwards came to her the still more stirring tidings of his burning of Meulan and Port de l'Arche, his passage of the Somme, and his magnificent affair at Crécy. Here, too, she kept her court, while marshalling her forces in the north, where David, king of Scots, breaking into the realm, was taken on the field of Nevill's Cross.

On Edward's return to Windsor Castle, he resolved to celebrate his victories in France by two great acts of state. He would erect a new king's house, and he would found a new order of knights; and both his edifice and his order should be placed under the tutelage of a patron saint.

In William of Wykeham he had an architect to

his mind; but where was he to seek a patron for his new society of knights? King Arthur was a failure. Even in his legendary form, Arthur was neither saint nor hero. He had fought against the English. An appeal to Arthur in the day of battle was unlikely to nerve an English arm. What Edward wanted was a patron saint, whom all his people, whether lords or commoners, could adopt; a personage whose fame would offer them a banner and a cry.

Where was the king to find that patron saint?

CHAPTER XIX.

PATRON SAINTS.

1347.

St. Edward was the king's own saint: his patron at the font, and his protector in the field. Edward was always on his lips; his own name; his son's name; his father's name; his father's father's name. St. Edward was the guardian of his house; and yet St. Edward was unsuitable as a patron saint.

Beauclerc had placed his chapel at Windsor Castle under the protection of that Saxon prince, but many of his barons had refused to call his chapel by that Saxon name. They were a foreign army, and they wished to hold their conquests by the sword. St. Edward, though a mighty spirit, had never awed these barons. Hence the chapel at Windsor Castle had been sometimes called St. Edward's shrine, at other times Our Lady's shrine.

Two patrons were invoked from the same altar step. In time the native saint had gained the upper hand, and from the birth of Edward the First the Saxon saint had been firmly rooted in the chapel of the royal house.

Yet this high patronage was due to king and court alone. Windsor was without a special saint, as England was without a special saint. France had a patron in St. Denis, Scotland in St. Andrew, Spain in Santiago; but the English dynasty and people had not yet discovered their point of union in a common worship and a common flag.

English burghers and Norman barons had each their favourite guardians; but these guardians stood apart, and represented hostile camps. An English burgher prayed to St. Cuthbert, or St. Swithin, or St. Edmund, while his Norman neighbour swore by St. Valery, or St. Etienne, or St. Julian. All these tutelars were parochial. If St. Cuthbert reigned in Durham, St. Swithin reigned in Hampshire, and St. Edmund in the Eastern shires. St. Valery, St. Etienne, and St. Julian, were French; one ruling on the Somme, another on the Orne, and yet another on the Sarthe. None of these holy personages had been strong enough to overcome his

rivals, and impose his worship on the jarring elements of an Anglo-Norman camp.

Like older deities, whom they had long ago displaced, the Christian tutelars were mainly of the soil. London owned a patron in her canonized bishop, St. Erkenwald; Lincoln in her canonized bishop, St. Hugh. York owned a patron in her canonized primate, St. William; Canterbury in her canonized primate, St. Thomas. Oxford reposed under the protection of St. Frideswide; Worcester under that of St. Wolfstan. Cities like St. Asaph, St. Davids, and St. Albans, had no other names than those of their local saints. Windsor, though she had no special saint, was covered by the nimbus of St. Lawrence; a holy man who had once resided in the royal forest, and had built a cell on the hill which bears his name.

England was a nursery of saints, and Edward was engaged in swelling the numbers of her calendar. In a single year he had proposed no less than four new saints; Thomas, late earl of Lancaster; John, late bishop of Lincoln; William, late bishop of Bath; and Robert, late archbishop of Canterbury. No member of his dynasty had yet been canonized. France boasted her St. Louis, Spain her San Fernando. Of Saxon saints, there was no end; and

even since the Conquest, members of the Saxon dynasty — St. Margaret for example — had been sanctified by the popes. Edward was eager to possess a family saint. Thomas of Lancaster was such a personage ; a man of his own blood, yet popular with the English folk ; who loved him as a victim of the favourites in the previous reign. But Rome was slow to gratify the king. A new St. Thomas could not help but interfere with Becket, who was still regarded as an idol by his Church.

No single figure in the calendar stood out so far beyond the rest as to assume the stature of a national saint.

Where, then, was Edward to seek a name that court and city, castle and parish, would accept ? Suppose he took a Saxon saint ? His barons would decline his choice. Suppose he took a Norman saint ? His commons would refuse his choice. These local saints had taken sides. St. Valery, a favourite with the Norman lords, had failed to force his worship on their English carls. Why so? St. Valery was an enemy, whose image had been borne aloft by the invading host. St. Edmund, a favourite with the English, was unpopular with the Norman lords. Edward the Confessor was a neutral saint. Though buried in London, he was far

less popular that St. Erkenwald. No such press of pilgrims crowded to his shrine as flocked to the altars of St. Cuthbert and St. Edmund. Yet, these saints were all provincial. South of Trent, few persons knew the virtues of St. Cuthbert; north of Trent, not many gave their confidence to St. Edmund. Out of his own province, each was but the shadow of a shade.

One name, indeed, there was which threatened to assume the place of national saint; but that one name was equally distasteful to the ruling barons and the reigning house; a name of dark and bitter memories, recalling to the king and his supporters nothing less than a disastrous battle of the crown against the Church.

That name was Becket, now St. Thomas of Canterbury, whom the king would gladly have seen replaced by that of St. Thomas of Lancaster.

Becket was the greatest power in England, perhaps in Europe; greater than St. Meinrad, greater than the Three Kings, and at least an equal of Santiago. Becket was hardly dead a year before the fame of his miracles had brought in pilgrims from all parts of England, and induced the pope, whose champion he had been against his country, to exalt him to the skies. Few martyrs

had been canonized in so much haste. William of York, his rival, had been dead eight years when Thomas of Canterbury was enthroned; yet Thomas of Canterbury was canonized a hundred and twenty years before William of York attained that dignity. But Rome, though eager in his cause, hardly outran the public zeal. The shrine in front of which her servant had been slain, became a place for prayers and gifts, for pilgrimage, penitence, and absolution. Other and older chapels were deserted. Holy roods, and bones of saints, and models of the Sepulchre, and houses of the Virgin of Nazareth —all these symbols of devotion failed before the martyr's tomb. Sinners from all countries poured into the land; so that, by the time when Edward was inquiring for a patron, Canterbury had become the rival, not so much of Westminster and Walsingham, as of Compostella and Cologne.

Yet St. Thomas of Canterbury could never be adopted as a patron by the reigning house. He was their evil genius, and his rise an evidence of their defeat. The king, his murderer, had been pardoned by the pontiff only on condition that he laid aside his sceptre and assumed the cross. Lion Heart, heir to his father's curse, had borne that cross into the plains of Sharon, but had not

been privileged to see the Temple and relieve the Sepulchre. In part redemption of that curse, Edward the crusader had gone to Palestine. Ever since the day of his martyrdom, St. Thomas of Canterbury had been a whip of scorpions to the royal house.

Nor were his name and worship less repugnant to the feudal lords than to their prince. Four members of their order had despatched the priest, believing they had Henry's sanction for the deed. Not only had those knights been made to pay the penalty of their crime, but their order had been made to feel the outraged conscience of the Church. Becket was to them the symbol of a great adventure and a great defeat. No Norman knight could loyally adopt St. Thomas for his patron saint.

Where was the king to seek a patron saint? What personage in the calendar could supply him with a common banner and a common cry?

Another want had risen. Sluys was the first great battle that an English fleet had won against the French. That victory had made King Edward master of the sea, while his more recent capture of Calais had enabled him to close the straits. England was entering on her empire; and in seeking

for a patron, she required a saint as potent on the sea as on the land.

Was there in the calendar such a saint?

Yes; one, and only one—St. George.

By chance, or what seemed chance, the king who, innocent of Becket's blood, had been compelled, in expiation of his murder, to join the crusade, had discovered on the shores of Cyprus a patron who was able to dispute the foremost rank with Thomas of Canterbury, and in the course of ages to unseat and to replace that popular saint.

Though little known in England, George of Lydda was greatly reverenced in the East, especially by the Cypriotes, the Syrians, and the Greeks. His birth-place bore his name, the city of Lydda having sunk into St. George. By Cypriote, Greek, and Syrian, he was worshipped as a sovereign of the sea; by Frank and Saracen as a protector of fighting men on shore. To Richard's eyes he was presented as a champion of the cross. Yet his connexion with the sea was earlier known, his worship in that character wider spread, than his repute as leader of the Christian host.

In truth, the primary conception of St. George was that of master of the deep.

More than St. Vincent is to a modern Spaniard

and St. Nicolas to a modern Russ, St. George was to a Byzantine, and to the Frank who sailed in Greek and Syrian waters. He was worshipped as the power from whom all demons of the deep—all ministers of storm and flood—shrank back in dread. He, and none else, was master of the winds and waves. At every rising gale, at every lowering cloud, the dusky mariners sent up cries to heaven from shroud and deck—'St. George! O help, St. George!'

All cities lying on the sea were given into St. George's charge, and many of their approaches bore his name. The entrance to Constantinople was called St. George's Arm. The spit outside the harbour of Seleucia was called St. George's Point. The roadstead on the north of Beyrout was called St. George's Bay. All stormy capes and headlands were his property. A Cape St. George stood out from Rhodes; a second Cape St. George from Thessaly. More than one rocky nose in Cyprus bore the name of St. George. Rocky and dangerous river mouths and channels, like Dog river and Negropont, lay under the protection of his shrines. The main outlet of the Danube was called St. George's mouth. On almost every height along the Euxine and Propontis, cloisters were erected

in his service; buildings which served as watch-towers, sea-marks, and asylums, for the ship-wrecked crews.

In Cyprus, nearly all the ancient temples of Apollo—built along the shore—had been converted into chapels of St. George.

Nor were the Saracens behind the Greeks and Cypriotes in their devotion to this maritime power. No Moslem sailor in those ages put to sea without an invocation to Khidr, the Arabic form of George; a name implying in the Arabic idiom his connexion with the deep. Caught in a gust of wind, an Arab mariner cried out, 'Ya Khidr!' just as a Greek or Syrian cried, 'St. George!' Sanctuaries were built along the coast by Moslems to Khidr, as chapels were erected by Christians to St. George. No matter of what race or creed, all Eastern mariners were eager to propitiate that ruler of the floods.

Some of those Moslem sanctuaries of the middle ages still exist; famous ones at Saiba, Sareptah, Blancheward, and Ascalon; to all of which Moslem sanctuaries of St. George the Arab mariners still go on pilgrimage.

As lord of the storm, and not as soldier of the cross, St. George was introduced to the Venetians and the Genoese, by whose returning keels his fame

and worship were first brought into Italy. Three churches were erected in his name at Venice, and the people, trusting like the Greeks to his defensive power, put the approaches of their city under his control, erecting his chapel on that islet of San Giorgio which commands the Piazzetta and the Grand Canal. The Genoese erected churches in his honour, both in Genoa and in Naples. From this southern city the marauding Normans introduced his worship into France.

This maritime worship had no point of contact with the ordinary notion of St. George.

CHAPTER XX.

ST. GEORGE.

1347.

St. George came under Richard's notice in the isle of Cyprus. After his defeat of Isaac, the usurping duke of Cyprus, Guy king of Jerusalem, and Garner, master of the Knights Hospitallers, came to salute him. Guy was a worshipper of St. George, and Garner wore the costume and the arms of that distinguished saint. 'St. George!' was the victorious war-cry of the knights.

St. George, as Lion Heart heard, had first been seen by Godfrey de Boulogne at Antioch, in a character unknown to either Cypriote, Greek, or Saracen. He was an armed and mounted knight, clothed in white mail, mounted on a white horse, and wearing a white shirt, on which was stamped a blood-red cross. Except for his attire, he might have been taken for a vision of the god of light.

So habited and mounted, he had led the Christian hosts to battle; dashing into the Moslem ranks, swathing them down like grass, and scattering them to the wind like chaff. From Antioch, the white knight with the blood-red cross had led his followers to Jerusalem.

When Godfrey of Boulogne was chosen king, the worship of St. George had spread apace. Lydda, the city of his birth, became St. George; the bishop of that city was declared, in honour of St. George, precentor of the Holy Sepulchre. The knightly orders, founded to guard and feed the pilgrims, took him as their model in equipment and attire.

In many an after-field brave men had donned his armour and displayed his flag; not seldom paying for such daring with their lives. These knights of St. George were always singled out for combat: even Sultan Saladin himself regarding them as worthy of his sword. When a stout warrior fell before his onset, all the Saracen host cried out, 'St. George is slain!' Richard, on landing at Acre, heard that the martial saint was dead; but he was soon aware that, whether dead or not, St. George was mighty in the prowess of his knights —men who were ever, as King Richard found, the foremost to attack, the latest to retire.

Garner, master of the Hospitallers, was an English knight, and such a fighting man as Richard loved. His war-cry was 'St. George!' Richard's own cry was 'God and the Holy Sepulchre!' But in the fight at Arsuf (ancient Reseph), Lion Heart learned to prize the war-cry of that local saint. As Saladin's troops came on, Garner put up his prayer: 'O, Holy George! victorious warrior, wilt thou suffer us to be overwhelmed?' Then, turning in his saddle towards the English king, he asked his leave to charge: 'My lord and king, let me go at them!'

Hardly waiting for an answer, Garner and his company spurred forward into the Saracen lines, raising their cry, 'St. George! St. George!' and bringing on the battle which compelled the Sultan Saladin to retire across the plain.

That victory gave the city of St. George into King Richard's hands; and from that day, Lion Heart took up, as one of his own cries, the slogan of St. George.

St. George was born at Lydda, in the plain of Sharon, near the sea; a place which, even in the time of Christ, was venerable and sacred; known to all nations, whether Syrian, Jew, or Greek, by variants of a common term, each variant signifying

City of God. El was the native name of God, and Lydda was the dwelling of that native god. The Hebrews wrote it Lod—city of El; the Greeks wrote it Diospolis—city of Zeus. This character of the town had never changed. Long after Christ, the city kept her sacred name; equally in the Syrian Ludd, the Arabic Khidr, the Byzantine Victorious, the Greek Hagaigeorgeopolis, and the Frank St. George. To every nation, and in every idiom, Lydda was a sacred spot. Her history was like her name. Under the Maccabees, Lydda had formed a portion of the Temple lands. She was afterwards one of the earliest cities to receive the gospel. First among the saints of history were the 'saints who dwelt at Lydda.' Peter lodged within her walls, and here, in the dwelling-place of El, he wrought that miracle on Annas which converted all the plain of Sharon. Lydda was the seat of a Christian bishop and of an early council of the Church. In aftertimes, a Jewish college was established in the town, and pupils of Hillel wrangled with followers of Shammai on a spot which had been part of their Temple property. Still later, under Saracenic rulers, Lydda took a place in the sacred legends second only to Jerusalem. Khidr was the scene of Armageddon, the final

battle of the world, when Anti-Christ, whom the Arabs call Al Dajjâl, was destined to be met and slain by Christ.

In this strange town, the child was born and lived who in the coming centuries was to lend his name to the great shrine at Windsor, and to fling his ensign from innumerable English masts.

Richard brought back his fame as champion of the cross ; but English devotion to his worship was excited by his reputation as controller of the deep. As champion of the cross and patron of the knightly orders, he was welcomed in the court and camp ; but by the river side, and in the ports and harbours, he was welcomed as the enemy and conqueror of the demons of the sea, the river and the marsh. A chapel in Southwark, a parish church on the Avon, and a monastery on the Liffy, were erected in his honour. His repute extended far and wide. A few years after Richard's death, his festival was ordered to be kept as one of our national holidays. 'God and St. George' became an English war-cry, used with the older slogan, 'God and St. Edward.' Reign by reign the worship of St. George extended. Edward, the crusading prince, had raised his battle-cry of 'St. George!' at Acre, and his grandson, Edward of

Windsor, had stormed the French galleys to that cry at Sluys.

After that naval victory, the saint of Lydda shared the king's devotion with St. Edward; and when Calais fell before his arms, and England rose into the foremost rank of maritime powers, the victor felt that he had found his patron in that naval saint, who had given to him the victory of Sluys.

How came St. George to be a naval saint? What virtue, heritage, and mandate, gave that Syrian soldier his control of wind and wave; his faculty of dragon-slayer, and his sovereignty of the sea?

Church legends have preserved an outline of the actions of St. George. A son of rich and Christian parents, he had sprung from the descendants of those 'saints who dwelt in Lydda.' Born in the higher ranks, he entered the imperial service, when that service tolerated Syrian creeds. He won the grade of tribune, equal to commander of a regiment, and was otherwise employed under the lieutenants of Diocletian. When the persecution of his faith broke out, the young aristocrat laid down his offices and commands, to cast his lot with the more helpless, but not less devoted,

members of his church. Arrested by Roman officers, he asserted his conviction of the truth. Put under torture, he rose above the malice of his judges, and declared his readiness to prove his loyalty by his blood. They sentenced him to death; an order which he accepted as a martyr's crown.

When he was gone, according to these legends of his Church, a crowd of pilgrims gathered round his tomb, and found relief in body and in soul. Miracles were wrought—the martyr was proclaimed a saint. Constantine built a church above his tomb; Justinian rebuilt that church, and on a grander scale. From that time, George of Lydda was a recognised prince among the Byzantine saints. When the Crusades began, he left his throne in heaven, put on the armour of a knight, and made himself a soldier of the cross. Leading his hosts from Antioch to Jerusalem, he placed them on the ramparts of the holy city, and confided to their hands the birth-place and the tomb of Christ.

These legends leave the mystery unexplained.

They tell us nothing of St. George as ruler of the sea, as guardian of rivers, straits, and ports; yet herein lay the earlier and the more abiding

notion of the saint. A common impulse governed all the votaries of St. George. Much as the Greeks made him defender of their coasts, and the Venetians of their ports, the western nations placed their seas and channels under his control. The French committed to his charge their tempest-beaten isles and inundated river-banks; such places as St. George d'Oleron, St. George sur Cher, and St. George sur Loire. His English votaries gave his name to places liable to inundation, like St. George's parish on the Severn, and St. George's marshes on the Thames.

Why, then, are all church legends silent as to his connexion with the sea?

Again, they tell us nothing of the dragon; nothing of the combat which procured for him the title of Victorious; yet herein also lies an ancient and abiding notion of St. George. George without a dragon—sea-devil and devourer of virgins—is not George at all. In the iconography of all countries there are figures of St. George; Egyptian figures, Byzantine figures, Venetian figures, German figures, French figures, English figures; but a George without his prostrate and defeated monster is a picture and a statue still unknown. The dragon and the dragon-slayer may be seen on coin and

medal, and in stone and bronze ; but not a single image of the saint exists apart from that of the great reptile he has slain. Why, then, are all church legends silent as to his encounter with that monster of the deep ?

The truth is, that St. George is heir of many tribes and creeds ; of many Christian legends and of many Pagan myths.

Lydda took up the myths of neighbouring cities and conveyed them to her famous son.

A few miles north and south of Lydda lay two small but independent ports ; Reseph on the north, Ashdod on the south. Rivals in trade, the burghers of these ports were enemies in creed. Reseph was the Phenician god of light ; a being of the air. Ashdod was the Phenician god of water—dagon or dragon ; serpent or crocodile—a being of the deep. All creatures of the air wage war on creatures of the sea. Reseph made war on Dagon. In the course of ages, Reseph overcame his rival and the city of Ashdod perished from the the earth. At length, the conqueror perished also ; and the myths in which their story lived, became a property of the neighbouring and surviving town of Lod.

Greek mariners kept these names and myths

alive. They called the port of Reseph—by translation—Apollonia; the port of Ashdod—by translation—Azote; one, city of the god of light and life; the other, city of the demon of darkness and extinction. Greek poets told the story of the conflict of these Syrian cities in the legend of Perseus and Andromeda. Perseus comes to Jaffa and slays the beast. A motive purely Greek is introduced. For his reward, he gains Andromeda; a motive foreign to the Semitic spirit. But the notion of a fight between an upper god and nether demon was a property of all nations having rivers, lakes, and seas. Egypt had her monster of the Nile, her demon of the Bitter Lake. Not only Perseus, but Bellerophon and Hercules made war on dragons. Dagon, Typhon, Set, with all their peers, the Gorgons and Chimeras, were creatures of the sea, the river, and the marsh.

So, in the after ages, under Christian teaching, every stream and morass liable to floods was haunted by a dragon which devoured the people till a local saint arose. We had our green dragon of Mordiford, our great dragon of Pittempton, our still more famous dragon of Norwich. France had dragons of the Seine, the Garonne, and the Rhone. Gargoulle, dragon of the Seine, was killed by St.

Romanus. Tarasque, dragon of the Rhone, was slain by St. Martha. The Germans had a dragon of the Rhine, memories of which remain in the Drachenfels, and in the wine called Dragon's blood. The Swiss communes were rich in dragons and dragon-slayers; witness their Drachenreids and Drachenloks, and their heroic Struths and Winkelrieds.

These monsters of the deep were of an Oriental, not of a native type. Nearly all these beasts were of the Nile; that of Rhodes a hippopotamus, that of Ragusa a crocodile. The better known monsters of Lyons and Marseilles were crocodiles.

To Egypt, therefore, we should look for the original dragon-slayer; the progenitor of our patron saint.

Was there a dragon of the Nile—a dragon-slayer of the Nile? If so, what shapes had they?

There was a dragon, and a dragon-slayer of the Nile. That beast was Set, the Evil One; and wore the figure of a crocodile. That dragon-slayer was Horus, god of light; and wore the figure of a man. Greek writers call the Egyptian city of Horus—by translation—Apollonia; just as they call the Phenician city of Reseph—by translation

—Apollonia. Horus, Reseph, and Apollo, were the three names of one and the same deity—the god of day.

According to the rules of Egyptian symbolism, Horus had the figure of a man, the face of a hawk. Greek taste forbade these combinations of man and beast, but in Greece the hawk was sacred to Apollo. In a bas-relief of Horus, now in the great collection of Egyptian monuments at the Louvre, we find the original of St. George. Horus, the god of day, is in the act of slaying Set, the water-fiend, embodied in a crocodile. A mounted hero, armed, attired, and posed exactly like our patron saint, his foot is on the reptile's neck, his lance is entering through the reptile's spine. In every point, except the bird-like face, this old Egyptian bas-relief is a presentment of St. George.

Our patron saint of Windsor—and of England—is the heir of many tribes and many creeds. When Reseph melted into Lydda, and when Lydda sank into St. George, the myths of other gods and heroes gathered round the saint. St. George absorbed the Egyptian god of light, taking possession of his figure and his fame; much as in Spain St. James took up the ancient legends of Hercules, put off his quality of a Christian bishop,

and developed at Compostella into the patron, champion, and commander of all the Spains.

The saint enshrined at Windsor, and inscribed on English coin and English banner, is the God of Light.

CHAPTER XXI.

SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE.

1348.

Edward returned to Windsor from his conquests, burning with devotion to St. George, henceforth to be his saint, his banner, and his cry. In April he proposed to hold a court at Windsor, to receive the captains who had fought with him in France, and, in his consort's presence, to establish a Society of St. George; a band of knights and dames, in which the bravest of the brave were to associate with the fairest of the fair.

First were to come the king and queen, as foremost knight and foremost dame. Next were to rank the Prince of Wales, with Lady Isabella, eldest daughter of the king. Henry of Lancaster and his consort were to follow next; and so the company was to follow on through all the list of knights and dames.

The lists were drawn, the barriers raised in the upper ward, under the queen's window-sills ; but when St. George's day came round, Edward was compelled to put off joust and revel on the queen's account.

All noise and tumult had to be suppressed. The queen was near her time ; and in her absence, as the foremost dame, his opening festival had to be postponed.

His aims were practical, his means romantic. Knights and dames were equally his weapons of attack. To Edward, in this stage of his career, knighthood and lady-love were chiefly instruments of war.

His jousts of the round table, held in the upper ward, with revels in the Norman keep, had served him well. Soldiers had come to Windsor, not from Aquitaine and Flanders only, but from lands beyond the Mincio and the Rhine. New weapons had been introduced, and English prowess had been spurred by rivalry. Most of the heroes of his Windsor tournaments had marched from Caen to Calais. Friendships were formed among these foreign knights. Some of his visitors trumpeted his fame in courts, while others helped him by diversions in the field. Philippe, his enemy, had

tried his method, but without success; for he was wanting in the knightly sympathy and poetic insight of the English prince.

Edward had a sense of two great forces in the minds of men which led them to perform heroic acts; the first, a sentiment of brotherhood in arms; the second, a desire to shine in female eyes. These forces he enlisted in the service of his crown.

Brothers are equals; and equality was the first condition of his new Society of St. George. The members must be knights. Outside the walls of Windsor they might rank as either princes or commoners, but in the upper ward and Norman keep they were to meet as peers. His knights of St. George were to give and to receive each other's thrusts; they were to sit in common stalls, dine at a common table; and that table, being round, had neither head nor foot, but was the same in dignity for each and all.

In choosing his first list of knights, Edward gave to his commoners a share in due proportion to their value in his camp. Among his twenty-five companions, two were princes of the blood, two were earls, three were barons, eighteen were simple knights. Merit, not rank, was Edward's pass-

word to the Order of St. George. Philippe had failed by giving too much power to princes of the blood. Edward's society was a commonwealth of peers.

His second thought—the power of female eyes to call up fighting force—had come to him in his Calais lines.

Queen Philippa had joined her husband in the camp near Calais, bringing with her full details of the fight at Nevill's Cross; a victory no less splendid than his own great victory on the Somme. Her news and presence had inflamed his court; for every one regarded her as the heroine of Nevill's Cross; and every one strained into a hero when her majesty was looking on. She had not come alone. With her were all the ladies of her train; wives, sisters, sweethearts of the lords and knights. The advent of these ladies had produced a stir throughout the lines.

Close had been the watch, and picturesque the scene, before these ladies landed. Edward, entrenched before the walls, had waited long for his expected prize, resolved to have the town, though he should lie before the gates for twenty years. Outside the bar had lain the English ships, warm with their victory at Sluys; and in the distance,

crowning many sandhills with their oriflammes, were Philippe and the chivalry of France. Tamed by their recent rout, the French had kept aloof, while Edward was content to press the town. But when the queen and her attendants came, a spirit of adventure roused the severe, but sluggish, camp. Edward now saw that even his bravest knights fought better when their valour was displayed before admiring female eyes. The same thing had been seen at Sluys.

Could he embody this heroic fire in a society of knights and dames ? St. George, his patron, was a champion of the fair.

Societies and orders were in plenty ; monkish orders and military orders ; but the king's idea was as little like that of St. Albert, founder of the bare-footed Carmelites, as like that of Hugh de Payen, founder of the Knights Templars, or like that of Raymond de Fitero, founder of the Knights of Calatrava. All existing orders traced their origin to the Church, and were controlled by clerical rules. They had religious ends in view. Bound by monastic vows, the members were in opposition to the female sex. Edward's idea was the reverse of Raymond's idea. He proposed to found a lay society, open to men and women, so that

female influence might be brought in play. Men of high station were to rank with women of high station—bravest of the brave with fairest of the fair. Such persons could not take monastic vows. Nor had they any need. Their purposes were lay and secular—to serve their king and keep alive their patriotic fire. In such a system chivalry and lady-love might be employed. Woman, as a motive power, might supersede the monkish vow.

A son was born to Edward while his knights were waiting for the jousts. Carried from the queen's apartments to St. Edward's chapel, this son was christened Thomas, after that family martyr—Thomas Plantagenet, whom the king was trying to persuade reluctant popes to canonize. After Philippa was churched, Edward renewed his summons in her name and honour, so that she might take her place as foremost lady of St. George. He called himself her knight, and challenged all comers in her name. For his device he took a white swan. His motto, blazoned on his shield, was in the nature of a general challenge :

'Hay! hay! the white swan.
By God's soul, I am thy man.'

His knights replied in casque and steel; Warwick and Chandos, Audley and Beauchamp, Grey and Lisle, Courtenay and Mortimer. His captives were invited to the jousts; David king of Scots, Charles de Blois, and Raoul of Eu, the Constable of France. Shafts were broken, knights unhorsed. David rode well, Charles better; but the crown was given to Raoul of Eu — a crown for which the unlucky Constable had, on his return, to pay with his head; so jealous of their Order was the king of France!

From that day forth the worship of St. George has grown with English growth, and spread with English enterprise. Greece brought St. George into the Ægean Sea. Venice extended his empire to the Adriatic; while Genoa introduced him in Sicilian waters. England has established him throughout the earth. On every ocean we have borne his flag, on every island we have reared his fane. But we have kept him as a naval, not as a crusading, hero. We gave his name to St. George's Channel, the stormy inlet of the Irish sea. Entering the vexed Bermudas, we set his banner on the highest of their stormy reefs. The direst peril in the Atlantic Ocean we have called St. George's Bank. No Greek was truer to his old conception of his saint,

than we who have become his followers. In seas of which the tribune never heard, we have established him as a ruling power. From Behring Straits to Maine, from Florida to Patagonia, we have set him up on guard. When we were mapping out the Land of Desolation, in the Indian Ocean, we named the rockiest headland of that territory Cape St. George.

In Windsor we have given a permanent presence to St. George. The sovereign comes and goes — a visitor, like other pilgrims at the shrine. St. George remains. Elsewhere the sovereign wears the royal arms, her servants wear the royal liveries. On Windsor hill St. George is king. At Windsor, Queen Victoria lays aside her arms ; and like the officers of her household, dons the livery of St. George.

CHAPTER XXII.

LADY SALISBURY.

1348.

Like other old societies, the Windsor Order dropt its original name, and took up an unseemly nickname. From the badge, a ribbon not unlike a garter, sprang the canting word which in the course of years replaced the saintly and chivalric name. With this unseemly name came prank and jest. A garter indicates an amour, and a knight who wears a garter on his sleeve may be supposed to challenge merriment. King Edward wore a ribbon, like a lady's garter, on his sleeve. Ha, ha! The merry monarch must have been in love. With whom? King's house and tilting-yard were busy with this mystery. At length the scandal settled on the fame of Lady Salisbury; but only after dallying for a season with the name of Lady Kent.

The story ran, that Edward of Windsor, dancing with a lady in the royal house, saw her drop her garter, and immediately stooped to pick it up. Some of the dancers near them smiled; on which his majesty turned round to them and said, 'Honi soit qui mal y pense'—Shame be where harm is thought. In merry mood, he wore that ribbon as a badge, and took that saying for a motto.

None of the early chroniclers pretend to know that lady's name. Those who were nearest to the scene in time, supposed that dancer was the queen; but when the story travelled far and wide, and had to be recited with effect and point, the jongleur found that the fact of a man picking up his wife's garter was a little tame. The story wanted spice; a prickling of the palate, and a relish on the tongue. A 'merry tale' means something wrong. That dancer should have been some courtier's wife. Seeking a paramour for the king, the story-tellers fixed on Lady Kent; but she was dropt in course of time; the jongleurs finding that a story of King Edward and Lady Kent interfered with the still more popular story of Prince Edward and Lady Kent. Queen Philippa was dropt because she was a wife; Lady Kent was dropt because she

was a child. Then Lady Salisbury took the lead. She was the dame who slipt the garter; she was the siren who enslaved the king. Grave antiquaries, at a loss for explanations, followed in the jongleur's track. Why not? Edward, they said, was only thirty-two. Lady Salisbury was a lovely woman, and her husband was away in France. The king was desperately in love with her. Garters were often lost in dancing, and a partner worth a curtsey always snatched them up.

A page was added to the Hundred Merry Tales.

Froissart and Waurin tell a story of King Edward's passion for Lady Salisbury. In their pages, the affair is creditable to the lady, who resists the royal suit, and not dishonouring to the monarch, who retires from his attack in time; rebuked by the matron's purity, and chastened by her fine rebuke.

The story ran, that David Bruce, crossing the border without notice, laid siege to Wark, a house belonging to the Montagus. Lady Salisbury, happening to be there, stood out on her defence. Edward marched up from Windsor to repel the king of Scots, who, laden with his booty, fled at his approach. Pitching his camp in front of Wark, from which the raiders had retired, Edward slipt

off his armour, and pressed forward to salute the countess, whom he had not seen since the day of her marriage, and to thank her and her people for their stout defence. She, on her side, putting on her best attire, stept from her castle, and meeting Edward at the gates, curtsied to the ground, thanking him for the rapid marches which had saved her from a fresh assault.

Raising her up, and leading her into the hall, Edward became enamoured of her grace and beauty. He paid her compliments, which she turned aside with ease and modesty. She showed him to his rooms, and there his words grew warmer, and his gaze more ardent; but she held him off, and that with so much charm of speech and manner, that his passion warmed into a fire. He said he loved her and desired to serve her. She protested, as a faithful subject, that her life and fortune were at his disposal—in the ways of honour, and in true devotion to her lord. The earl, her husband, was away in France, a prisoner for the king, a faithful servant of his highness, like herself. Listening to her words, Edward began to feel ashamed.

When they had dined, he called for chess. She played one game with him. Wishing to leave

some token in her hand, he said to her on sitting down :

'Lady, what will you stake on the game ?'

She answered gaily :

'Sire, and what will you ?'

Drawing a ring from his finger, the king laid it down on the table. Lady Salisbury looked uneasy, for she saw his meaning in the movements of his hand.

'Sire, I have no such ring as yours to pledge,' she murmured.

'Lady, put down such as you have. I set no store on mine.'

Drawing a plain ring from her finger, and laying it down beside the king's stake, she moved the first pawn. Edward kept his eyes fixed on her face, which caused her skin to burn, her mind to wander. Pawn and knight were lost, but Edward kept on even with her game. When she lost a piece, he lost another, till at length the king was mated and the lady won. Then Edward rose to go ; his vanguard being already on the Scottish trail. The lady, calling for wine and spice, put her own ring back on her finger, and gave the king his own, saying it was unseemly

that a hostess should take anything from a guest in her own house.

'Lady, the game was so; if I had won, I should have taken yours.'

Not to provoke more words, Lady Salisbury slipt aside, and giving the royal ring to one of her damsels, bade her watch till the king was mounting his horse outside, and then run up to him and return it, though with courtesy and thanks. A cup being filled, the king prayed his fair hostess to drink him a God speed. She bade him drink the first. He would not drink before the lady, nor would the lady drink before the king. Much pleasantry occurred. At length they made it up; two cups were filled, and they agreed to drink at the same time, each to the other, for the love of peace. Then other cups were handed round. The king's knights drank to the lady's damsels, who drank to them in imitation of the king and countess—cup to cup.

Seeing the knights and damsels merry and employed, the king took hold of Lady Salisbury's hand, which he pressed in token of his love, saying to her—privately—in a whisper:

'Dear lady, may God keep you till my return.

I pray you think of me, and be of other mind when we meet again.'

'Sire,' returned the countess, 'may the Lord of glory go with you; and may He take from you all dishonouring thoughts of me. I am and always shall be ready to serve your highness to your honour and my own.'

Leaving her in the hall, Edward strode to the courtyard, where his horse stood ready saddled. There he observed the damsel waiting her opportunity to return his ring.

'My liege, behold this ring, which my lady sends back to you,' said the girl, curtseying to the ground; 'she humbly prays that you will pardon her for not keeping your grace's ring. You have done so much for her, that she is bound to be your servant always.'

Edward looked that damsel in the face, and answered:

'Damsel, since the small winnings of your mistress do not please her, keep the ring for yourself.'

Riding away, he left his gift in the girl's hand; hoping that his siren, finding his stake in her possession, would retain it for his sake. But he was wrong. True to the memory of her absent

lord, Lady Salisbury put the bauble from her, and her servant was allowed to keep the ring herself, even as the king had said.

Edward, more in love than ever with the countess, got the earl released from his French prison, and recalled him to the court at Windsor, in the hope that he would bring his wife. But Lady Salisbury, on her guard against his passion, found excuses for remaining in the north. At the ensuing festival of St. George, Edward invited Salisbury to bring his lady to Windsor for the jousts and feasts. He wished her to be well attired and well attended, bringing the ladies of her household with her, and as many of her neighbours as she had the wish to please. Salisbury bore this gracious message to his wife. She was unhappy, but was forced to hide her sorrow. Only too well she knew the king's intent; but she could neither tell her husband, nor refuse the royal courtesy. Kings' invitations are commands. She came to Windsor for that festival with a foreboding heart.

Now, if at any time, that dance, that dropping of the garter, and that exclamation, must have taken place; but neither Waurin nor Froissart has one word about that dance, that garter, and that

'merry jest.' These details warmed to life at a much later time.

At Windsor, the suit commenced at Wark was ardently resumed; the lover warm and pressing, and the lady sweet, yet cold. By prudent words—and by a manner matronly and pure—Lady Salisbury overcame the king. His majesty gave up the chase, leaving the faithful wife victorious in her long and perilous campaign.

The tale thus told by Froissart and Waurin, though inserted in a narrative of facts, was the invention of a nameless troubadour, whose rhymes were written into prose by Jean le Bel. Jean le Bel rejected much of the troubadour's verse. Froissart and Waurin, copying Jean le Bel, rejected much of his adopted prose. Singing to a coarse audience, the troubadour made Edward's passion for the lady end in shame. Writing for a foreign audience, Jean le Bel followed that troubadour. Froissart, writing for courtiers, looked into that part of Jean le Bel's statement, and finding it grossly false, rejected it from his narrative; but even Froissart was unwilling to expunge the whole romantic episode of a passion for Lady Salisbury from his text. He kept so much of the invention

as served to brighten his page, without libelling his patron.

Not one word of these old tales was true.

When the Order of St. George was founded the countess of Salisbury then alive was Catharine, daughter of William Lord Grandison, and the heart-broken widow of William, first earl of Salisbury. Her husband died at Windsor in January 1344, of bruises which he had received in tilting. She was then advanced in life. Her son was fifteen years and seven months old. Next year she followed her husband to his grave.

All the earlier writers name the queen as heroine of the Windsor legend. Edward and the queen were much at Windsor in the times succeeding Crécy. In 1346, their daughter Margaret was born at Windsor, and in 1348 their son Thomas was born at Windsor. Philippa was fond of dancing. 'Honi soit qui mal y pense.'

Edward took the garter as a badge, the saying as a motto; one of the many badges and mottoes which he took up as the humour seized him; but, by accident, this badge and motto were not dropt as others had been dropt. A seal was being made for his new Order of St. George. He bade the

engraver put the badge and motto on that seal. Thus, the members of his new society, though called Knights of St. George, were summoned to meet in Windsor under the seal of the garter and the motto of 'Honi soit qui mal y pense.'

Since Queen Philippa, princess Isabella, and princess Joanna, ladies of the Order, wore the robes, powdered with garters, we may safely set aside all theories of the badge and motto of St. George having sprung from an indelicate incident in a low intrigue.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DAVID, KING OF SCOTS.

1348–57.

A ROYAL prisoner looked down on these festivities in the upper ward. At times this royal prisoner was allowed to break a lance and court a fall.

When Edward of Windsor was still a boy, his sister, called Joanna de la Tour, from her birthplace in the Tower of London, had been sold by her mother Isabel, and that mother's paramour, Roger de Mortimer, into the slavery of a political match—sold to David, son of Robert the Bruce. The boy was five, the girl not seven years old. Mortimer pretended he was buying peace, when he was really selling a disgraceful truce. Few had liked the bargain; least of all the young and beardless king. Courtiers and citizens—all, save

Mortimer's partizans—had denounced the match, and equally on public and on private grounds.

The peace was but a pause in the great feud of ages, yet a peace for which the country had to yield her rights beyond the Tweed. Ragman Roll had been given up—that famous document which had pledged the fealty of Scotland to the English crown. Holy Rood had been given back—that famous piece of the True Cross, which, once the property of St. Margaret, and used for her devotion, had come to be regarded as a war-spell, to be carried in the front of battle. The Scottish regalia had been restored. A pledge was made by Mortimer to send the Stone of Destiny to Scotland; but the London burghers, flying to arms, had driven his masons from Westminster Abbey in dismay. All spoils of war that briefs and patents could restore to Scotland had been given to Bruce. The fruits of Berwick and Dunbar were lost. Bruce had been recognised as an independent king, free from allegiance to the English crown.

Joanna was the hostage of that peace.

No less repugnance to the match was felt on personal grounds. The Scottish king and prince, father and son, were odious and contemptible

in English eyes. Robert was dying of a loathsome leprosy, and David was supposed to have inherited the taint. That foul disorder might descend to poor Joanna's offspring. David, even as a child, was dirty, weak, and vicious, with a violent and vagrant temper, likely to grow worse as he grew up in years. The motives of the marriage were corrupt. Men knew that Mortimer was being paid in money for his help. King Edward, though a minor, stood aloof from this bad business, steadily resisting his mother's prayer that he should take his sister to the frontier, and present her to king of Scots. To him the peace was a disgrace.

When Robert died, David was anointed king. Edward now saw the consequences of his mother's acts. Her restoration of Ragman Roll had changed the standing of the Scottish kings. No previous ruler of that country had been consecrated by the Church. Rome, chary of her graces, drew the line at independent kings ; refusing to anoint where any shadow of allegiance seemed due to a superior lord. David asserted that he owed no fealty to mortal man. And so the Church anointed him, giving him a higher sanction than his fathers, who had

worn the crown, but had never been anointed with the sacred oil.

David soon broke the English treaty, which had given him Lady Joanna for his bride and queen. Though angry, Edward held aloof; but some of his ill-used barons broke into the Scottish shires, beat the unruly boy in several fights, deposed him from his throne, and set up Edward Baliol, the pretender, in his place. Baliol was crowned at Scone. Both sides appealed to Edward —David as his brother-in-law, Baliol as a sovereign who was anxious to become his brother-in-law. David and Joanna were not man and wife according to the rule of Holy Church. David was still a child. Baliol proposed to take Joanna, marry her, and hold his kingdom as a fief. Edward received these offers warily. While he was weighing them, a tempest hurled the newly crowned king from his throne, and drove him to seek protection at the English court.

Edward received the fugitive at Windsor. With the glance of genius, he perceived in Baliol's coming to Windsor his opportunity of undoing some of the great mischief caused by Mortimer. Mounting his horse, and marching to the north, he

overran the Scottish counties, drove the boy-king and his sister into France, and set up Baliol as his vassal on the throne.

Not until Edward was engaged in his war with France were David and Joanna able to return. One tempest swept them out; another tempest swept them back. King Baliol fled across the border hills, and David, after seizing most of his strong places, followed him towards the Solway and the Tyne. Crécy alarmed him, and he prudently retired on Perth, where he remained at peace, amusing himself with low amours, while Edward was engaged at Calais in the hug of life and death. An agent came to him from the court of Philippe, and whispered in his ear that now had come his time. Edward was absent, Baliol helpless, and a woman at the Norman keep. Now, said that agent, was the time for him to raid and reeve. Joanna could do nothing to restrain her lord. David had never loved her, and was seldom in her company. Her purity and sweetness made his life look ugly. At the age of twenty David was old in sin, the lover of many females, none of them so young, so lovely, as his wife. Joanna's cup was bitter, and she saw no way of putting it aside. She had no

child to help her in keeping her husband David right.

David (his poet answers for him) was 'jolly' at the prospect of a raid into the English shires. The English forces were abroad, and only priests and women were at home. On vaulting to his horse, he shouted to his pages that he should not alight, except at the palace of Westminster. Bearing with him the Holy Rood, he broke through the border lines. Ravaging the defenceless country, he advanced as far as Lanercost and Hexham, one the cloister and the second the chapel of St. Cuthbert, spreading the consternation of his inroad to the gates of York.

Philippa acted boldly, and the northmen rallied to her call. Thomas, bishop of Durham, and William, archbishop of York, set up their standards, and the monks of Durham brought forth the corporax cloth of St. Cuthbert, as a talisman capable of contending with the Holy Rood. Nevill and Percy were appointed to command the border troops.

Five hours sufficed to break the Scots. Instead of dismounting in Westminster, David slipped from his horse, and stole away on foot, followed by John

of Copeland, a border varlet, who had marked his man. David crept into a thicket, hoping to hide himself among the spines and briars. But Copeland followed on his heels, and after the king had knocked out two of his teeth, the varlet pressed him to the ground, and took possession of his prize.

David was brought to Windsor. Agents came from Perth to treat for his release, and Queen Joanna, hiding her private sorrows, sent relays of messengers from Scotland to her brother's court.

The ransom set on David's head could not be raised by Queen Joanna's prayers. She turned to her royal brother. Urged by the Scottish queen, his sister, Edward named a sum. Joanna came in person, and was cordially received at Windsor, but was mortified to hear that Baliol was treated by her brother and his councillors as the actual king of Scots. The prisoner was only known as David Bruce. She was herself described on Edward's passport, not as queen of Scots, but as 'Joanna, our very dear sister, consort of David Bruce.' She was allowed to lodge with the king her husband; but when David was removed from Wind-

sor to the Tower, Edward refused to suffer his much-injured sister to share his prison cell.

Joanna quitted Windsor with an aching heart, yet resolute in her duty to the man who had kept so little faith with her. Even in his captivity, the king, her husband, was engaged in low intrigues, revolting to her honour as a wife.

For ten years David was a prisoner to his violated faith. Windsor shared with Nottingham and the Tower the honour of supplying him with a residence. When he was subservient to Edward, he was welcome to his lodgings on the royal hill; and as the years rolled by, David became more and more subservient to the English court. He offered to hold his kingdom as a fief. This compact placed him on a level with his rival Baliol, who was still the titular king of Scots.

Joanna now returned to London, hoping to set her husband free. On her arrival she discovered that her husband had become infatuated with a new siren, one Kate Mortimer. King Edward, angry on his sister's part, had tried to separate the wantons by removing David from the Tower to Odiham, and even to Newcastle; but the paramour had contrived to follow her royal lover, and to

share his solitude. Joanna's heart was sad, yet she resolved to work for the unworthy man, and in the end she got her brother's councillors to set him free. David was hardly on his throne again, before he sent for Kate, and set her up in public as a royal concubine.

Joanna's patience then broke down. Outraged equally in her love and in her pride, she quitted Perth never to sleep beneath the same roof with her faithless lord again.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THIRD KING'S HOUSE.

1357.

Wykeham, instructed by the king, was planning a new King's House. His first attention had been given to the lower ward, and most of all to the great chapel, college, and cloister of St. George. Henry of Winchester's house had proved a failure, though the outer works were stronger than any other masonry on the royal hill. The weight of stone had crushed the foundation outward. Winchester tower, as well as Almoner's tower, had fallen down the scarp. Only the Curfew tower remained along the northern wall.

Wykeham had rebuilt Winchester tower, but on a lighter scale. Here he took up his lodging, as a central spot, from which he overlooked his works in the upper and middle as well as in the lower ward. Much had been done before an acci-

dental parting of the three kings at Windsor led to a change of plans.

These kings were Edward king of England, David king of Scots, and Jean king of France. Like David, Jean was a prisoner on the royal hill; a man who was to leave a memory of his presence at the Castle in the name of King John's tower.

Jean le Bon, king of France, was brought to Windsor as a captive, taken on the field. Like David, Jean had struck a bye-blow in King Edward's absence, and, like David, he had fallen a victim to his enterprise. This ally and protector of the king of Scots had been taken in a battle more romantic and disastrous than his own defeat at Nevill's Cross.

That fight was Poictiers.

Edward, called the Black Prince, had been a fighting creature from his cradle upwards. As an infant, he was huge in size, his flesh like wire, his frame compact and strong. Exercise in the open air gave to his limbs the pliancy and fixture of a grown-up lad. At four he was invested with the sword, and dubbed a little duke. At seven he was a daring rider, and could poise his lance with the decision of a man. When he arrived at Antwerp with his father at the age of ten, ladies

cast eyes at him, as though he were a stripling of sixteen. Next year, his father trusted him with the Tower. At fifteen he was knighted on the field in France, and thenceforth took his place among the captains of his age. Five weeks after that knighting in the field, he was at Crécy—where the veterans of his father's camp saluted him as a knight and demigod. Four years after Crécy, came his sea-fight with the Spanish fleet off Rye. Next year he passed to Aquitaine, and on the death of Philippe de Valois, stood on his defence. Jean, the new king, whose flatterers styled him Jean le Bon, was false and treacherous, and the prince renewed the war, which, at the end of five years, was to set him face to face with his arch enemy on the field of Poictiers, his most brilliant and controlling victory.

This victory brought the king of France to Windsor, and produced a memorable change in the appearance of the Castle hill.

Poictiers was the first great battle of the Windsor knights: the first great battle of the Windsor saint. In other days St. George had been invoked. Richard had struck in the name of 'St. George and the Holy Sepulchre.' Edward had cried at Sluys, 'Ha, ha! St. Edward and

St. George.' But these had been the cries from single lips. At Poictiers every knight and captain knew his patron saint, and the deciding charge was ordered in the name of St. George.

A bitter feeling mingled in the fray; for Jean le Bon had played the part of tyrant to a man who had made for himself a host of friends among the Windsor knights. This man was Raoul, Count d'Eu, the Constable of France, whose prowess in the tournaments of St. George had carried off the crown. Unable to raise his ransom, Raoul had lingered year by year; true to his king and country, yet asserting that King Edward showed fine qualities, and that his English knights were brave. Gentle and gallant, Raoul had been a favourite of all ranks. Ladies had smiled on him, making his captivity less bitter, and the king had welcomed him to all his Windsor festivals. When Jean succeeded to the throne, Raoul had prayed King Edward to let him cross the strait and try to raise the money for his freedom. Never doubting that a knight so noble would redeem his word, Edward had given him leave to sail. But Raoul had neither sent his ransom nor come back. On reaching Paris, he had spoken in Edward's praise: also in praise of the Society of St. George. Jean,

resenting this praise of a rival and an enemy, had put his Constable to death. No process had been used. Jean had sent the Duke de Bourbon and some other agents to his house, with orders to arrest him in the king's name and slice away his head. His post of Constable was given to Charles d'Espagne. Eu, his county, was bestowed on Jean d'Artois, eldest son of Count Robert, as a bribe for quitting the English side. Raoul's murder had raised up enemies, not only to Jean le Bon, but to Jean d'Artois, the newly made Count d'Eu.

Three of the Windsor knights, Beauchamp, Audley, and Chandos, sailed for Normandy, and fighting ran along the line, from Calais to the Gulf of Lyons. Edward set out from Calais, driving the king of France before him, and ravaging Artois and Picardy as far as Hedin, in the neighbourhood of Crécy. Lancaster was in Brittany. The Black Prince overran the south. Audley proved his mettle, burning and slaying to the suburbs of Rouen. Yet the feat of feats was a raid of the Black Prince from Bordeaux to the Loire; an inroad of contempt, dared with eight thousand men, all arms included, in the face ot a French array not less than seventy thousand strong.

The armies met at Poictiers. Jean le Bon, not dreaming that the prince would fight him, sent an offer to abstain from crushing the English forces, if the prince yielded up his person. 'England shall never pay my ransom,' said the hero, buckling on his mail. 'I hope,' cried Chandos, 'there will be a fight; if we are beaten by such a multitude we shall incur no blame; and if we beat them we shall be the most glorious fellows in the world.' Jean's heart beat high, as he perceived the enemy overlapped and covered by his mighty host. 'Now, gentlemen!' he cried to his attendants, 'when you are in Paris and Rouen you are always threatening the English. Look at them. You have your wish.' The onset failed, and the attacking force fell back. Then Edward sprang on them: 'Ride on, banner! In the name of God and of St. George!'

The duke of Normandy fled the field. Bourbon was killed, and by his side fell the new Constable, Charles d'Espagne. Jean d'Artois, the new Count d'Eu, was stricken down. Raoul was avenged. Jean strove to rally his dispersing troops. Raising his battle-axe, he shouted to his banneret to advance in the name of 'God and St. Denis;' but the king, though high in mettle, was disarmed

and taken prisoner. To the last he spurned the warriors who had struck him down, declaring he would yield to no one but the prince—a cousin of his blood. Denis de Mortligne held him fast, and he was almost torn to pieces in the press of men. 'Hold! hold!' he shouted; 'I am rich enough to make all your fortunes.'

Warwick came up, and carried his royal captive to the prince's tent.

Near Jean were taken his son Philippe, afterwards duke of Burgundy, Jacques de Bourbon, Jean d'Artois, and the count de Tancarville. The Savoy Palace was assigned to Jean and Philippe as a residence till their ransoms were received. A few months later, they were moved to Windsor for the benefit of air and sport, and lodged with their attendants in the south-west angle of the upper ward, in chambers ending in a vaulted tower, three stories high; an outwork and defence (crossing fire with the Devil's tower), which ever since that day has borne the name of King John's tower.

A man of forty, long of limb and stout of heart, Jean spent his time in hunting, tilting, and reading romances. He had his destriers, his hunters, and his palfreys. He required some books

and paid attention to the binding of these books. Among the romances bought by him were the 'Romans du Renart,' the 'Romans du Loherenc Garin,' and a 'Romans du Tournoiement d'Anti-Christ;' but while he lived at Windsor he was most of all concerned about his dogs and hawks.

A man of pleasure, Jean le Bon gave himself no trouble about his country, and not much about his own captivity. So long as he could eat and drink, ride after hounds, play tennis, and enjoy the society of ladies, Jean was easily consoled. Two charming women whom he met at Windsor were of French descent; the first, Lady Warren, being a daughter of the Count de Barr; the second, Lady Pembroke, being a daughter of the Count de St. Pol. These ladies were so frequently at Windsor Castle, and indeed in King John's chambers, that they might be said to have formed a portion of the captive's court.

Edward was at Windsor parleying with the king of France and king of Scots about his new buildings, when a jest, dropped by one of his captives, led to a great enlargement of the royal house. St. George's chapel, St. George's college, with lodgings for the knights and canons, were rising from the ground. These works were in the lower

ward. All that remained of Beauclerc's house were the Devil's tower, the lesser hall, the king's chamber, the queen's cabinet, and some domestic offices. The upper ward lay open towards the east, covered only by a parapet and ditch. Jean le Bon, a man of excellent taste in building, criticised the site:

'Your Grace's castle had been better on the higher ground than where it stands: there would be more to see, and your turrets would be visible a long way off.'

David agreed with Jean. Struck by their remark, Edward replied in banter, that their highnesses were right, and acting on their lesson he would bring his castle to the hill. They smiled. Edward explained that he would so enlarge his buildings by new rooms and galleries as to reach the pleasanter site. That would cost much money. Yes; but the ransoms of his critics should defray the cost of these great works.

At the ensuing festival of St. George, King Jean said merrily: 'I have never seen such shows and feastings without an after reckoning in gold and silver coin.'

His reckoning when presented proved a heavy bill; six million nobles, of which six hundred thousand were to be paid down, and forty thou-

sand every year, till the last noble was discharged.

Caught in a clandestine correspondence, Jean le Bon had to be removed from King John's tower in Windsor, as a place too free and open for a man who pledged and broke his word. Once only he returned to his lost hunting-grounds; a holiday and festive visit: but his strength was broken by the Jacqueries which his tyranny and prodigality had brought on France. Seven years after his capture at Poictiers, Jean le Bon died in exile, leaving his name and memory at Windsor Castle, in the lodgings which he had occupied in King John's tower, and in the upper ward, which his remarks had caused to be inclosed and surrounded by the Third King's House.

CHAPTER XXV.

BALLAD WINDSOR.

1377.

Of Windsor in the days of great King Edward and good Queen Philippa,—while the royal partners were surrounded in their new lodgings by their sons and daughters—Edward the Black Prince, Lionel the giant, John of Gaunt, afterwards to be 'time-honoured Lancaster,' Edmund the debonnair of Langley, and the turbulent Thomas of Woodstock—Isabella the beloved, Joanna the queen, Mary the duchess, and Margaret the romantic—we have glimpses in the jongleurs and ballad-mongers of the time, and in the chroniclers and story-tellers of succeeding times.

Chaucer was with the king at Windsor, in his new abode, acting as an officer in the royal household. Froissart, who was often in his retinue, loved to dwell on the majesty of Edward's castle and chapel.

Minot came to Windsor. All the troubadours and minstrels coming to the court from foreign countries came to see the tournaments of St. George. The chroniclers of St. Albans were in constant intercourse with Windsor. Hence, the castle, and the chapel, and the forest, entered into ballads and romances—native and foreign—at an early day.

We have a glimpse of Windsor Castle in the English ballad of Richard king of Almaigne:

> By God, that is aboven us, he did much sin,
> That let passen over sea the earl of Warinne;
> He hath robbed England, the moors, and the fens,
> The gold and the silver, and carried them hence.
> For love of Windesore,
> Richard,
> Tho thou be ever trichard,
> Trichen shalt thou never more.

At greater length, a Norman story-teller wrote the famous romance of Windsor, on the adventures of Fulk Fitz-Warine. Froissart connected Windsor with the legends of King Arthur. Chaucer introduced the lord of Windsor and the lord of Windsor's son, Edward the Black Prince, into his Romaunt of the Rose. Among the ballad treasures we have the story of King Edward and the Countess of Salisbury, the lady so often quoted as

the heroine of the garter incident. The ballad writer does more justice to the lady as an honest wife than Jean le Bel and his nameless troubadour. He shows the 'fine device' by which Lady Salisbury managed to turn the king's guilty passion into noble compliment and service:

'And I consent, if you will grant one boon to me.'
'I grant it, my lady fair, whate'er it be.'
'My husband is alive, you know,
First, let me kill him, ere I go,
And at your command for ever will I be.'

'Thy husband now in France doth rest.'
'No—no! He lies within my breast,
And being so nigh, he will my falsehood see.'

Lady Salisbury bares her breast, and raises her knife to smite. The king starts up in shame, seizes her hand, wrests the steel from her grasp, and vows that he will never speak to her of love again.

In the more famous ballad of John de Reeve, the king's bondman boasts of drinking as good wine as 'Edward or his queen.' The Fall of Princes celebrates

Edward the Third, that wan Gascony and Guienne.

In the ballad of Guy of Warwick, that doughty

hero was declared to have commenced his feats—in imitation of the labour of Hercules and other heroes—by destroying the great boar of Windsor forest :

> In Windsor forest I did slay
> A boar of passing strength and might.

The pleasant story of the Poor Man and the King is chiefly laid at Windsor, to which place the injured fellow has to follow the court from Westminster :

> For when he came to London street,
> For an host-house he did call ;
> He lay so long o' tother morning asleep,
> That the court was removed to Windsor hall.
>
> He hath gotten a gray russet gown on his back,
> And a hood well buckled under his chin,
> And a large staff upon his neck,
> And he is to Windsor to our king.
>
> So when he came to Windsor hall
> The gates were shut, as he then stood,
> He knocked and poled with a great long staff,
> The porter had thought he had been wood.
>
> He knocked again with might and main ;
> Says 'You ho ! Is our king within ?'
> With that he proffered a great reward,
> A single penny to let him come in.

How the Poor Man saw the great king, and

how justice was done to him in Windsor hall, are told in every collection of old English verse.

Merrier still is the ballad of King Edward and the Shepherd. Edward, hero of the tale, rides out from his palace, like the Eastern caliph, to speak with ordinary men, and hear what they report of him, and his doings in affairs of state.

Our king went him in a tide,
To play him by a river side,
  In a morning of May.
Knight nor squire would he none,
But himself and a groom
  To wend on that journey.

With a shepherd con he meet,
And greeted him with wordis sweet
  Without any delay.
The shepherd loved his hat so well,
He did it off never a del,
  But said—'Sir, good day.'

Amused by the hind's rustic ways, the king enters into talk with him:

The king to the herd said than,
'Of whence art thou, good man?'
'In Windsor was I born,
It is a mile but here before,
I am so pilled with the king
That I must fly from my woning,

And therefore woe is me!
I had my cattle, now I have none;
They take my beasts, and I dare them slone,
And payon but a stick of tree.'

Such wrongs—as Edward found—were done, not only in Windsor, near the king's house, but in every English shire, and under every castle wall. The baron's officer took what he wanted, always at his own rate, and commonly paid his debt in wooden tallies; as the text says, in 'sticks of trees.' Edward tells the shepherd it is a great sin that poor men should be cheated of their goods, and asks him to come next day to Windsor castle, and let the king hear of his wrongs. He hints that he has a friend at court, who can help them at a pinch; if need be, even to see the king himself. Then he pumps the shepherd:

'What will men of your king sayen?
Well, little good, I trow?'
The herd answered him right nought,
But on his sheep was all his thought.

Edward tries him again, pretending to be a merchant. Drawing closer to the hind, he whispers that he, too, is a sufferer, for the king's men owe him a thousand pounds and more. Won by this confidence, the herd tells him that the king's men

owe him five pounds two shillings, and that all he has to show for his debt is a bit of hazel twig. Edward inquires his name. 'Adam the shepherd.' Adam asks the king's name. 'Jolly Robin,' answers Edward. Drawing yet closer, the king invites him to call at Windsor next day, and see what can be done. At Windsor! How is he to pass the gate? 'Ask the porter to let thee have speech with me.' Adam warms to his new friend, and says, he will; and promises that if Robin should get him back his five pounds two shillings, he shall have seven shillings out of the money for his pains.

Robin now asks him what the king's men do? Adam tells him how the fellows go about in nines and tens, doing what they list with wife and maid, so that the husband has to hide his head, the father eat his bread in shame. They steal geese and hens, lift sheep and cattle. If a man objects to their doings, they tie him up in his own cart-shed, while they play their pranks in his house and barn.

Time passes in this talk. Robin grows hungry; and Adam invites him to his cottage for a bite and sup. On the way a coney starts. Robin begs him to sling the game, but Adam shakes his head,

—those coneys are the king's. No living man dare touch that game!

> The shepherd's house full merry stood,
> Under a forest fine and good.

Seeing much game about, Robin exclaims that if he lived in that place he would have some of it on his trencher, whether the king liked or not. 'Hush,' replies Adam, 'some one will hear.'

A cloth is laid by the shepherd's wife. White bread and twopenny ale are brought out; and then, to Robin's surprise, a heron, a crane, a wild swan, with curlews and mandlarts, are produced. They dine and drink,—Adam as merry as his guest. By this time Edward begins to know his man. Entering into all the fun of his adventure, he remarks that of all things he likes a slice of buck or doe. Adam, looking at him with a twinkle, asks whether he can keep a secret? Robin engages not to blab. Then, coney pie, hart pie, roe pie, are heaped on the board. Robin looks up. 'All alive yesterday,' says Adam, with a chuckle, 'and came into the house by moonlight.'

Adam comes out strongly. Warming with the

twopenny ale, he gives Robin a lesson in the art of drinking. When Robin lifts the cup, he is to cry, 'Passylodion!' and his comrade to reply, 'Berafrynd!' Passylodion, he explains, means 'To you—to your health.' Berafrynd means 'Heeltaps, and fill again!'

Falling into the shepherd's humour, Robin cries 'Passylodion' and 'Berafrynd' to his heart's content.

> Thus, they sate withouten strife,
> The king with Adam and his wife,
> And made him merry and glad.
> The shepherd bade the cup fill,
> The king to drinke had good will,
> His wife did as he bade.
> When the cup was come anon,
> The king said 'Passylodion!'

In the friendship of twopenny ale, Adam confides to his friend that he has better things yet in store. 'A little chamber that is mine' lies under ground. Robin shall go down into that vault, and see what he shall see. They go into a vault, piled full of wine and venison. Robin laughs, and they sit down to prove a keg of good liquor; Robin giving his word to keep the shepherd's secret, and to come again some other night.

Next day, Adam comes to the king's gate, and

asks for Jolly Robin. Acting on hints already given, the porter offers to show him. Edward, standing in the hall, talking with his cousin of Lancaster and the earls of Stafford and Warren, sees him approach. 'My lords, when that shepherd comes up, address me as Jolly Robin.' Laughing, they agree. 'I'll wager, now, a ton of wine, that though the best lord among you should avail to that rustic, he will not return the courtesy by doffing his cap.' Stafford goes forward to meet the shepherd. 'Hail, good man!' says the earl, politely; 'whither wilt thou go?'

Without unbonneting, Adam replies: 'To Jolly Robin, that I yonder see.' Stafford requests him to leave his staff and mittens with the porter. 'Not a bit of it,' says Adam, moving on. He wants to see Jolly Robin; he can hold his staff and mittens for himself. Not liking the look of things, Adam tries to back out:

> I am afeard my sheep go ruin
> On other mennys land.

But Robin now comes up, and nods to him, in a way that puts him more at ease. Drawing the king aside, Adam asks him who those fellows are. Robin replies, that the first is Thomas, earl

of Lancaster, and the next to him John, earl of Warren. Adam gets more uneasy. 'Never mind them,' whispers Robin; 'I will take you to the marshal, and will speak to him myself for you.' On coming to the hall, Edward asks him to wait in that place, while he goes in to find the marshal. Adam, not liking to be left, cries after him:

> Robin, dwell not long from me,
> I know no man here but thee.
> This court is nought but pride.
> I never come of no such fare.
> These high halls, they are so bare.
> Why are they made so wide?

Presently comes Robin with the lord steward, who pays Adam his five pound two shillings. Not expecting to get his money, Adam has left his 'stick of tree' at home; but he affirms that he has the debt scored on a tally. Counting his coin, he offers Robin the seven shillings for his pains. Edward, refusing his gift, invites him to dine at the king's expense. Adam fights shy. He rather distrusts those fine fellows, and fears the king's meat will not agree with him. Then there are the king's men, who may be rummaging in his barn—who knows? But Robin insists, and the shepherd stays:

When tables were laid and clothis spread,
The shepherd into the hall was led.

His staff laid by, and his mittens hung to his girdle, he is placed at the board. Robin, to his amazement, sits by the queen. Edward the Black Prince comes to him, and bids him, from Jolly Robin, play his game of passylodion and berafrynd. Adam complies, the king hobs and nobs, and everybody drinks and laughs. When meat is done, the Black Prince offers him a ring, as a keepsake. Not at all, says Adam. What is the good of a ring? A good hat, now, would keep off sun and rain. A ring? In half a day it would be gone. 'When it is broken, there's an end.'

After dinner, the king sends for Adam to his cabinet. Adam, hearing French and Latin spoken on all sides, gets troubled in his mind. These people must be sorcerers and fiends. How else could they jabber all that French and Latin? The king leans back in his chair, and laughs:

Come here, Adam.
Take the spices and drink the wine,
As homely as I did of thine.

Adam, though afraid of Latin, has no fear of

liquor. So he lifts the cup, but as the brim touches his lips, a squire runs up to him, and whispers that the man he is nobbing with is the king. Adam falls plump on his knees, the king laughs heartily, and the ballad ends.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE FAIR COUNTESS.

1361.

On parting from David, her faithless husband, Joanna, queen of Scots, retired to her brother's court, when King Edward gave her the Saxon castle of Hertford as a residence. She left her solitude but twice: the second and more memorable time, to visit Windsor Castle for the nuptials of her nephew, Edward the Black Prince, and his cousin, Joan, the 'Fair Countess' of Kent.

The rite took place in St. George's chapel. Edward, the king, was absent, being high and angry with his son for choosing such a wife as Joan; a fair and shining, but a weak and violent woman, unfitted by her temper and her training to become the mother of a race of kings. The hero listened to no counsel. Headstrong in his love as in his valour, he opposed his father's verdict on the

match, and took the idol of his fancy in the presence of two queens—his mother, the queen of England, and his aunt, the queen of Scots. Show, feast, and dance were on a royal scale; but the king's absence from the shrine and board—absence of warning and reproof—threw a prophetic gloom across the scene. Old men foreboded evil days to come. Young people called the match romantic; thinking of nothing but the lover's passion and the lady's face.

Unwedded at the age of thirty-one—in days when princes married at fourteen—Edward, the Black Prince, had been the hero of a dozen amours and intrigues. At ten he was proposed to Margaret of Brabant, a bride of five. After that affair passed over, he was offered to a child of France. Spain, Portugal, and Sicily, were searched for him in vain. No princess in the world could slight the hero of so many battles, and the heir of so many provinces; but the young man seemed both blind and deaf to female charms. He listened to no counsels. Both the king and queen were anxious that their son should marry. Court and parliament were eager to salute a prince, who might grow up into their king. True, the Black Prince had brothers springing up—Lionel of Ant-

werp, John of Gaunt, Edmund of Langley, Thomas of Woodstock ; all, like himself, young, handsome, stalwart fellows ; but the Prince of Wales, adored by every one as a hero, was expected to transmit his blood and fame to his successor on the throne.

He listened to one siren only, and that siren's voice made music to him all in vain. Her birth was regal, her complexion fair. He loved her ; she returned his passion. But the obstacles dividing them were many, and, in spite of Edward's love, these obstacles parted them for many years. The girl he loved was older than himself. They were of kin ; so near in blood that papal dispensations were required. Neither king nor queen approved the prince's choice ; the king on public, and the queen on personal grounds. The girl was promised to another man ; that William, earl of Salisbury, who had struck with him at Rye, and borne the brunt for him at Poictiers. The gallant soldier claimed his wife.

The heroine of this episode was Joan Plantagenet, Lady de Wake and Countess of Kent, in her own right. The girl was royal on her mother's side as well as on her father's side ; her mother, Lady Margaret, being a daughter of Blanche Plantagenet, daughter of Henry, earl of Lancaster. Two

ancient lines had merged in Lady Margaret; the barons of Wake and the earls of Kent. These lordships fell to Lady Joan, her child; so that the young Plantagenet beauty had the power to raise the man who won her to the barony of Wake and to the earldom of Kent. But birth and rank were lost in presence of the girl's surpassing beauty. All the rhapsodies of love, and all the sophistries of art, might be exhausted on this woman's charms. Her beauty was a wonder of the earth. Fair Maid of Kent, Fair Countess, Beautiful Lady, were but some of the endearing epithets applied to Joan. Ballads were sung in praise of her; and when she ripened into woman, and the romance of the prince's love for her stole abroad, the fervour of devotion seized on bards and story-tellers, who bore the fame of her beauty and the prince's passion for her, into every court and castle, and to every country fair and every village green. That tale took hold of every heart. The love of Joan the Fair Countess and Edward the Black Prince was a theme which never tired. Down to the present day peasants who have hardly heard the names of Crécy and Poictiers, are familiar with the loves of Edward the Black Prince and Joan the Maid of Kent.

The darker side of Lady Joan was hardly seen beyond the royal house; her moodiness, her petulance, her cruelty, her lightness, and her avarice. The king disliked her temper, and the queen doubted her discretion. King Edward wished his son to marry a princess, and secure an ally in some foreign court. Philippa feared that Joan was light of heart and otherwise unworthy of the prince, her son.

Joan had waited till her hero reached the age of twenty. Then, he had a right, as she imagined, to select his wife; but Edward, though a hero in the field and on the quarter-deck, played but a docile part in his father's court. To each side he was staunch. No woman drew his eyes away from Joan. No passion tempted him to cross his father's will. Though he would wed no woman but his cousin Joan, he would only wed his cousin when the king consented to his choice. In vain his father spoke to him of French and Portuguese princesses. If he might not marry Joan, he would remain a single man. The crown might go to Lionel and to Lionel's son.

A crisis came. Salisbury, with the king's connivance, seized the lady, and took her home. Nobody interfered. The Church was with the

earl. A contract was a contract, not to be dissolved, except by Rome. The councillors were with the earl; his action having put an end to doubts by carrying Lady Joan beyond the prince's reach. Jurists and canonists agreed that Salisbury was in the right. But Lady Joan thought otherwise. Detesting Salisbury, as a man to whom she had been chained in her cradle, she appealed in her distress, not to the prince, but to one of his fellow knights.

This man was Thomas Holland, one of the stout fighting men whom Edward's festival of St. George had drawn to Windsor. Springing from a poor, but noble family, he had risen by merit as a soldier to the rank of knight; and as Sir Thomas he had become acquainted with the lovely Lady Joan. She fell in love with him, and he with her. Their intercourse was secret; for the countess, though inclined to gratify her fancies, was unwilling to renounce her hopes. She liked Sir Thomas, but she wanted to be princess, and in time to be a queen. Snatched from her paradise of freedom by the man who called himself her husband, she appealed to Holland, who, on hints from her, surprised the king and council by a claim on Lady Joan as being his actual wife.

His actual wife! Yes, actual wife. Putting aside all sense of shame, Holland declared that he and the lady had not only plighted troth, but lived together as man and wife. This declaration changed the aspect of affairs. A contract stood for much; a contract followed by the nuptial rite for more. On being sent for by the king, Joan confessed the contract with Sir Thomas; when the king, perplexed by the contention of his lawyers, told the disputants that they must lay their case before the Roman court. Holland, sure of the young lady, made appeal. Clement was more perplexed than Edward, for the weight of law was one way and the weight of fact another way. Salisbury's case was clear in law, but Holland's stood on higher ground than law. The lady was his own; for though their contract had been secret, she had lived with him in the estate of man and wife. Before this argument, all paper evidence broke down. Clement decided for the lesser evil; and to make an end of business, Salisbury was induced, not only to forego his claim on Lady Joan, but to take another wife. A compromise was gained. Salisbury married Elizabeth, daughter of Lord Mohun, twelfth knight of St. George. Holland was recognised as lord de

Wake and earl of Kent. These newly-wedded rivals were all knights and dames of the Order of St. George.

King and queen felt happy in this ending of a troublesome suit. The king regarded Joan as out of the prince's way. Now, he thought, the prince would marry. Philippa was satisfied that Holland, and not Edward, had secured a wanton wife. Every one seemed happy—save the prince; who was not moved by passion and disdain to follow the example of his love.

All through Joan's married life, the prince maintained his friendship for the beautiful woman whom his father's policy and his mother's prudence had denied him as a wife. Scandal assailed them, but the prince remained her friend. Though Lady Joan grew stout, for she was five years older than himself, she was for him the peerless woman of his boyish dreams. No other female took his heart. For her, in spite of all the world, he kept his bachelor estate. If ever love was true and constant, Edward's love for Lady Joan was true and constant.

To Sir Thomas (now called earl of Kent) the Fair Countess bore three boys and one girl. To two of these boys the prince was sponsor. Scandal

alleged that to the younger lord his kinship was of closer kind; and in the following reign, that youngster — then in Italy — was described as a 'brother' of the English king. The prince knew best. When Holland died, and Lady Joan was free, he came to her once more, and sought her hand.

Edward supposed that at thirty-one he might please himself. The hero of Crécy and Poictiers was strong enough to resist his father, but he had to reckon with two other persons whose consent was necessary to his suit—the countess and the pope.

Joan he approached with caution, for the man was proud and high—conscious of his love, and no less conscious of the lady's whimseys. Would she wed again beneath her rank? He spoke to her of a man whose cause he seemed to have at heart. That man was her adorer. Would she see him? would she think of him? She answered—No. Why not? She answered—No. But as the prince's friend, and for the prince's sake? No, always—No! Joan understood her suitor's tricks. She was a woman, and a good deal older than himself. Love was her province, much as war was his. She saw *his* purpose, and she spoke out boldly:

'When I was a child, and under ward, not knowing what was done, I was given away by others. But those times are past. I am of age, and know my place. I shall not cast myself below my rank. My blood is royal. Should I marry a second time, my suitor shall be a prince, in quality and virtue equal to yourself.'

So Lady Joan replied in substance; and the hero understood her well. With a caressing movement he confessed that the suit he had been so warmly pressing was his own. Then Lady Joan accepted him.

Rome interposed. The prince and countess were of kin by blood, and nearer still by gossipry. As sponsor for her child, the prince had become Joan's spiritual brother, and a dispensation was required for each impediment in the case. But Edward made short work of these impediments to his love. Clement was at Avignon, but the prince, as duke of Aquitaine, lay near the Rhone. Pressure was put on Clement, and a brief was quickly signed. Neither Joan's lightness, nor the pope's delays, nor the monarch's opposition, turned the Black Prince from his enterprise. Waiting seven years for Lady Joan, he had seen her wedded to another man—had seen her beauty fade, her flesh

increase—but he had held on sternly in the chase, and having run her down at Windsor Castle, stood with her, smiling on his arm, fair, fat, and nearly forty, at the step before the altar of St. George.

The king refused to see this marriage rite. Lionel, his second son, was absent. John of Gaunt, and Edmund of Langley, came to Windsor, and the ladies of the royal house were present. Lady Isabella, Edward's favourite sister, stood near Lady Joan. Queen Philippa and Queen Joanna heard the service. Maud, countess of Hainault, was also in the church. Peers and bishops filled the choir, and the rites were solemnized with pomp and noise, in spite of the absence of King Edward and his second son.

From Windsor Castle, the prince and princess went to Aquitaine. Had they been able to draw the veil aside, and peep into the drama of the future reign, they might have thought with different feelings of the absent Lionel of Antwerp and the acquiescing John of Gaunt.

Princess of Wales, duchess of Aquitaine, countess of Kent, countess of Chester, and lady de Wake, the Fair Countess had her round of glory; but, in consequence of her husband's early death, she never wore the diadem of a queen.

Joan lived to see her worthless son, Richard of Bordeaux, assume his state at Windsor Castle; but her chief concern, even then, was with her children by Sir Thomas. In place of wishing to rest beside her hero, the Prince of Wales, in his magnificent tomb at Canterbury, Joan desired to rest in the little church at Stamford, near the simple knight whom by her marriage she had raised to the great dignity of earl of Kent.

CHAPTER XXVII.

RICHARD OF BORDEAUX.

1386.

In the ninth year of his reign, the nineteenth of his age, Richard of Bordeaux, son of the Black Prince and the fair Joan, being then at Windsor for the chase, was driven by his politic uncle, John of Gaunt, and his overbearing uncle, Thomas of Woodstock, into an act of perfidy and cowardice. They bade him take the seals from Michael de la Pole, his able chancellor, and send that faithful servant from his court. Richard complied. In giving that consent, he took the first step on his way towards Pontefract.

Richard had reigned nine years, and in his own opinion he was every inch a king. The word was always on his lips. In truth, the lad had some excuse for talking of his royalties, for since the moment of his birth all men and things

—especially his foolish mother and the fawning creatures in her train—had kept him in remembrance of his rank. He was born on the festival of the Three Kings. Two living kings had stood beside him at the font. At ten, he was himself a king, and on his coronation day, a bishop had put him in remembrance of the fact that his cradle was surrounded by reigning kings. As he grew up in years and follies, he had been reminded by his parasites that he ought to use his royalty as he used his chivalry. A knight could make new knights; a king should be allowed to make new kings. In sport, he made a king of the minstrels, and a king of the dales. He had a great desire to make his reigning favourite a king.

Like the Black Prince, his father, Richard was tall and comely, but without the warlike port of the Plantagenet race. Like the fair dame, his mother, he was gay and indolent, perverse and bountiful, more fitted for a nursery than for a throne. Some courage and some talent he possessed, but, like an infant of the south, he had no staying power. Once he had made his dash—and that with either sword or tongue—he fell into his listless mood, beaten by the recoil of his own fire. The lad was spoiled. Vain, frivolous,

lazy, he would hardly take the pains to read. He liked to yawn about and waste his time, playing at childish games with his young wife, a girl as limp and watery as himself.

Anne of Prague, his wife, had come to Windsor with a lofty pedigree and an empty purse. Her brother, Wenceslas, being emperor, the child was called 'sister of Augustus.' Fat and pink, with light blue eye and heavy flaps of cheek, this sister of Augustus was extremely plain; but she was low of voice and meek of aspect; so that Joan, the princess-mother, fancied she would exactly suit her son; a lad whom no one had ever been allowed to contradict. The lad was hard to please. Where nothing roused him, Richard could be kind; kind to his dog, his mother, and his friend: but woe to those who came athwart his mood! Loosen the furies of that mood, and neither mother, friend, nor dog, was safe. He had to pay a heavy price for Anne. In place of coming, like a royal bride, with dower and outfit, Anne was penniless and naked. She was put up by her brother like a slave for sale. How much for the sister of Augustus? Going to the highest bidder. Now then, kings and princes! Richard agreed to pay ten thousand marks for her; also

to bear the cost of carrying her from Prague to Windsor Castle. Having no money of his own he borrowed from the lenders, pledging his jewels with those usurers as security for his debt. No Caliph ever bought his rose of Persia or his light of the harem at a higher price. That sister of Augustus cost the young king of England over thirty thousand marks.

Boy and girl were like each other—shy and silent, fond of keeping in the shade and living free from care. They liked to be alone, peering into each other's eyes, and having pretty little pets and pouts. The only company they cared for was a page and abigail, with mimes and singing men to while away their time. A forest lodge, with food and clothes, horses and pages, and a court of masquers and story-tellers to amuse them, were enough for their delight. Affairs they left to other, but not stronger, heads.

Things soon became unbraced, uncertain, and unsteady. What was seen at Windsor, close to the royal house, was seen elsewhere. All rule, all discipline, was relaxed. Abuses spread. The poor knights quarrelled with the dean and canons, and the clergy charged the old soldiers with evading their religious duties. Some of the knights came

late to mass. One veteran fell asleep in chapel. More than one poor man drank ale. Suspicious females were observed about. The knights retorted that the dean and canons cheated them, holding back their pittances, and even eating up the venison sent to them as presents from the wealthier knights. Nor were the clergy what they should be as to purity of life. Father Clove used bad language, and made unseemly jests in church. Father Loring spent his days in fishing and hunting. Father Chichester hankered after other men's wives. The dean was no whit better than his brethren. He purloined the swan's flesh sent to the poor knights. He turned the college close into a cabbage garden. He put the dues received from vicars' stalls into his private purse. He let the whole society over which he ruled go sliding down the hill.

England, like Windsor, was on the slide, while Richard and his consort played, like children, at the game of king and queen.

The king's uncle Lionel was dead, but John of Gaunt, Edmund of Langley, and Thomas of Woodstock, were alive — all sage and able men, renowned in courts, and but too conscious of their

royal blood. John was now duke of Lancaster, Edmund duke of York, Thomas duke of Gloucester.

Lancaster, first in genius as in birth, was aiming at the crown. Already he had tried to get his right as heir proclaimed, excluding his infant nephew, Edward de Mortimer (grandson of Lionel), much as a former John had set aside the claims of his infant nephew, Arthur of Brittany. In Henry of Bolingbroke, his son, Lancaster had a successor no less able and ambitious than himself. This prince had both the talent and the prudence which command success.

York was not dangerous, for his mood was mild, his temper just. Keeping his hands from plots, he lent his timid countenance to the cause of order, loyalty, and peace. Gloucester was a rough and violent man, peremptory in speech and act, who treated Richard as a child, and made no secret of his view that this son of the Fair Countess was unfit to reign.

Lancaster came to Windsor on a business which might carry him abroad, and even call away his son. He was about to seek a crown. Would Richard help him to assert his right? If

so, Lancaster was ready with two drafts of treaties, but he would not have his treaties signed by Michael de la Pole.

Here, in a few words, lay the case discussed by Richard and his uncle Lancaster in the royal house.

Lancaster had taken for his second wife Doña Constanza, daughter of Pedro the Cruel. Pedro had no son, so that Constanza was the heiress of Castile. When Don Enrique, Pedro's bastard brother, drove Pedro from his kingdom, Edward the Black Prince had crossed the Pyrennees and set him on his throne again. But Pedro was unable to retain his seat. The bastard, being a favourite with all classes, had defeated Pedro in the field, and taking him in a snare, had stabbed him to the heart. That fighting bastard had seized the throne, to the exclusion of Don Pedro's child.

More than one foreign prince put forward female claims. Fernando, king of Portugal, grandson of Beatrix, daughter of Sancho the Fourth, assumed the crown of Castile. Don Carlos of Navarre, putting in a claim as heir-general of Sancho the First, assumed the crown of Castile.

These claims were raised in bar of Lancaster's wife. England had, in truth, two claims:—a first claim, on behalf of Lancaster; a second claim, on behalf of York. John of Gaunt had married Doña Constanza, elder daughter of Don Pedro; Edmund of Langley had married Doña Isabel, a younger daughter of Don Pedro. If the claims of these infantas were allowed, no jurist would contest the right of England to invade their country and expel the bastard's family. But their claims were not allowed. Constanza and Isabel were daughters of Maria de Padilla, one of the tyrant's 'favourites' who had never shared his crown. After Maria de Padilla's death, Pedro had owned her as his wife, her children as his offspring; but the presence of Maria de Padilla in his court had not prevented Pedro from marrying other ladies who were recognised as queens. Enrique, therefore, met the cry of bastardy by counter-cries of bastardy. Constanza had no son to claim in her behalf, and Lancaster had no other rights in Spain than those of husband to a wife of somewhat dubious birth.

Years had passed on, and changes come about. Enrique died, and was succeeded by his son, Don

Juan. Fernando died, and was succeeded by his son Dom Joã. Carlos died, and was succeeded by his son, Don Pedro. War had raged, but the pretenders had done little more than hold their own. Doña Constanza, duchess of Lancaster, bore no son. Doña Isabel bore a son to Edmund of Langley, duke of York—that Edward of York who was to spend his life in plots, and die a patriot's death at Agincourt. Next after his aunt Doña Constanza and his mother Doña Isabel, that Edward of York was heir of Castile.

Thus England had a motive for supporting John of Lancaster in his attempt to win by force the diadem of Castile.

To get the duke, his uncle, out of England, Richard was ready to pay that uncle's price, and so the treaty of Windsor was arranged and signed.

Lancaster insisted on some changes in the royal house. Michael de la Pole, then chancellor, was unfriendly to the dukes, and in his post of chancellor was likely to oppose them with effect. Let him, said Lancaster, be sent away from court. Richard complied, and Michael de la Pole resigned the seals.

Then Lancaster set out for Spain, intent on

storming the alcazar of Toledo; but he had hardly quitted Windsor Castle ere the beaten Pole crept back, regained the seals, and started, in the king's cabinet, a secret and a fatal opposition to the royal dukes.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

COURT PARTIES.

1386.

When John of Lancaster set out for Spain, he left his younger brothers, the insipid York and the tempestuous Gloucester, with the king. Bolingbroke was near, and ready to strike in, if need should come for blows; but he was hardly twenty years of age, and his experienced uncles took the lead at court and council. Michael de la Pole's return to office was a challenge to these royal dukes.

With York and Gloucester stood the most active prelates on the bench; Courtney, archbishop of Canterbury; Arundel, bishop of Ely; and Wykeham, bishop of Winchester. These prelates hated Pole as an intruding layman, who had stolen into the court of chancery—their manor—and had carried off the seals—their richest prize.

Michael de la Pole and Simon de Burley were the king's most able and faithful servants. Springing from the same soil and class—the northern soil and trading class—Michael and Simon were not so much men of the court as men of affairs; men who could speak and act, men who were equally at home in council and in camp. They were English; they were laymen. Michael came from Hull, Simon from Beverley. Each had the northern grit and force, the northern patience and staying power. Brave in the field, as they were sage in council, they had served under the Black Prince, and been attached by that commander to the person of his son. Michael was a good lawyer, Simon a thorough soldier. Each was an able, diligent, and trusty person; doing his duty to a weak and frivolous prince, who yet had sense enough to see his merit. In reward of service, they had risen to high estate; Michael being admiral, chamberlain, and chancellor, while Simon was constable of Windsor, knight of the Garter, vice-chamberlain, and warden of the Cinque Ports. They had faults in common, which their master took for virtues, and that master's kinsmen reckoned as the worst of crimes. They were upstarts; they were advocates of peace. The first defect outweighed all merits.

In the eyes of royal dukes, a man's first duty was to know his place. What right had upstarts to be standing near the king? Michael, in truth, had pushed too fast and far. While Simon was content with power, Michael had sighed for coronet and belt. In one of his foolish hours, the king had made him baron de la Pole and earl of Suffolk; creations which were said by his opponents, Lancaster and Gloucester, to be made against all rule and order in the peerage. Never before had merchant's son been made a peer; never before had chancellor been created earl. Old families like the Greys and Spencers were annoyed. Of course the king was acting in his right; the fount of honour was his personal royalty; but men whose ancestors had fought at Hastings were unlikely to admit that in creating Michael de la Pole a belted earl the king their sovereign had been well advised.

Courtney and Wykeham had held the seals, and each was hoping to get them back on the fall of Pole. Arundel, with better reason, counted on his promotion to the chair; his brother Richard, ninth earl of Arundel, being the foremost lay-supporter of the royal dukes, and therefore able to dictate his terms.

With Richard, ninth earl of Arundel, stood

Thomas, thirteenth earl of Warwick, and Mowbray, hereditary earl-marshal of England. These great lords were the most active, wealthy, and commanding peers at Windsor. Mowbray, as earl-marshal, held a place at Windsor hardly less important than the post of constable. He had a permanent residence on the royal hill, in the strong tower, then known as the Earl-marshal's tower. He ruled the tilting-yard. He was the president of every court of chivalry and honour. He had charge of all state prisoners of the highest class. Salisbury, the only rival of these earls, was with them; being a friend and partner of the royal dukes. But Salisbury was a broken man, to whom the sight of Windsor was a mortal pain. The jousts and tournaments of St. George seemed fatal to his race. Not forty years ago, his father, after fighting twenty battles, had been bruised and buffeted to death in a Windsor tilting-match; and now, his only son, William Lord Montagu, had fallen in the same Windsor lists, struck dead by the shaft of his own lance. But Salisbury was not wanted in the fray. Without his help, the array of dukes and earls seemed strong enough to crush such men as Simon de Burley and Michael de la Pole.

Around the king, in chambers near his cabinet, lodged the rivals of this powerful band: Nevill, archbishop of York; Vere, earl of Oxford; Tresilian, lord chief justice; Bramber, late mayor, and still alderman, of London; together with Simon de Burley and Michael de la Pole. These men were called the favourites; but the first in place and rank was Vere.

A young man, proud of his descent, and conscious of his talents—which were far from mean—was Robert de Vere, the king's first cousin by his marriage with Lady Philippote de Coucy, daughter of Princess Isabella, sister of the Black Prince. Doting, with a woman's fondness, on this handsome fellow, Richard of Bordeaux was loading his cousin's husband with such favours as Edward of Carnarvon had heaped on his unhappy favourite, Perot de Gaveston. Few men, save the royal princes, passed before an earl of Oxford, but among these few were the great earls of Arundel and Warwick. By a recent act, Richard of Bordeaux had set his favourite above these ancient peers; creating him earl of Ormond and marquis of Dublin for that purpose. Marquis was a novel dignity, unknown to either court or parliament. New ranks imply new rules, and no one knew the dignity and

precedence of a marquis. To prevent disputes, the king created Vere a duke. The rank of duke was well defined ; but, on the other hand, no peer, except a royal prince, had ever yet been made a duke. Many of the royal princes held the rank of earl. Roger de Mortimer, heir to the throne, was earl of March ; Henry of Bolingbroke, next male heir to Roger, was earl of Derby ; Richard of York, next heir after Bolingbroke, was earl of Cambridge. Vere's creation as duke of Ireland lifted him above these princes of the blood. New men are always hated by the elder-born. Arundel and Warwick frowned on Vere, the new duke of Ireland, much as Grey and Spencer, Mortimer and Cobham, frowned on Pole, the new earl of Suffolk. Who was Vere, that titles were to be invented for him? Had he served with glory in the field? Had he achieved success in foreign embassies? Nothing of the kind could be alleged. Why, then, should he be sitting among the sons of kings?

Nevill, archbishop of York, had a quarrel with Courtney, archbishop of Canterbury. They fought about their rights as primates ; Nevill wanting to carry his cross in the southern province, Courtney wanting to carry his cross in the

northern province. Courtney's dearest wish was to ruin Nevill, and Nevill's dearest wish was to ruin Courtney. They were not unfairly matched; for if Courtney held a higher station in the Church, Nevill added the great office of lord treasurer to his primacy of York.

Tresilian, a Cornish man, was lord chief justice of the King's Bench, and Vere's first cousin, counsellor, and friend; a man of high repute in law, but of a rash and over-bearing mood; one of those dangerous men who are at once austere in morals, and corrupt in mind. Fawning and sycophantic, he was ready to declare the law of England to be anything that suited Vere and Vere's advisers.

Nicholas Bramber, alderman of Bread Street ward, was master of the Grocers' Company, and member for the city of London. He had served as mayor four several times. In Tyler's rising he had been a-field with Richard. With his own sword he had killed the rebel Lister, and been knighted for that service on the spot.

A feud of ancient standing made this London magistrate hateful to the duke of Gloucester. During his first mayoralty, some of the citizens had a brush with Gloucester's servants. Gloucester was living at Cole Harbour, one of the great man-

sions on the river bank, not far from London bridge. Bad blood existed between his people and the men of Dowgate ward, for Gloucester was a hot, ill-tempered man, and his retainers echoed his abusive words. Affrays were often taking place. One night the fight grew serious. Some of the shopmen took up pole and axe, and after beating the duke's followers soundly, drove them into Cole Harbour, and demolished their master's gates. Gloucester was in bed. Startled from his sleep, the duke arose in fury, and demanded punishment on the rioters, and on the city magistrates who had suffered them to disturb his rest. Bramber refused to outrage justice, even for a royal duke. Gloucester was unpopular—an enemy of the new learning and the city preachers. He had enemies in every ward, and perhaps in every street. Unable to get his way in Cheapside, he complained of Bramber to the lords. A fine was laid on Bramber; but the city, feeling that the mayor was right, took up that fine, and paid it from the public chest. Instead of ruining Bramber, as Gloucester meant to do, the affair confirmed him in his place and power.

A man who knew the guildmen, and could answer for the city bands, as well as run a rebel

through the body, seemed a tower of strength to Richard, who had made the city magistrate a royal chamberlain, and kept him in attendance near his cabinet.

These six councillors—Vere and Nevill, Pole and Burley, Tresilian and Bramber — were at Windsor with the king ; while their opponents, Arundel and Warwick, Mowbray and Salisbury, were in London with the royal dukes—Henry of Bolingbroke looking on, with fingers bickering at his sword.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ROYAL FAVOURITES.

1386–7.

When Parliament met to vote the king's credits, Michael de la Pole was suddenly attacked. Pole held the seals, and his assailants wanted to see them in clerical hands. Arundel, bishop of Ely, was prepared to take his post. Richard was petitioned to take the seals from Pole on the ground that a charge was to be prepared against his servant, which could hardly be preferred against him while he was an actual chancellor. Vexed and alarmed, the king forgot his prudence:

'Tell the Commons they must never mention such a thing again. Give them my orders to proceed at once to the money-bills, and get them passed. Tell them, that for their sakes I would not dismiss the meanest scullion in my kitchen.'

Such words cost Richard more than his most

illegal acts. Losing his temper, he retired from court, taking Vere and Pole with him to Eltham, where he shut himself up from every one except these ministers. Peers and burgesses prayed him to return to Westminster: a parliament without a king was not a parliament: only a crowd of peers and burgesses without their chief. In answer to their prayers, he bade them mind their business. They were called, he said, to grant a subsidy; let them pass the credits and then go home. To these absurdities they answered that they neither could nor would go on with business till his majesty came back, and not even then, unless he ended the dispute by taking away the seals from Pole. Gloucester and the bishop of Ely went to see the king at Eltham. Richard, furious as a child, threatened to call in the French, and even to submit himself as vassal to the king of France. 'Better,' he said, 'be vassal to a king, than to a mob.'

Gloucester might be forgiven for saying that a man so petulant was unfit to reign.

Richard was weak of knee, as he was strong of speech. On hearing that the city bands were siding with the lords, he yielded to their wishes, rode back with them to Westminster, dismissed

his chancellor, gave the seals to bishop Arundel, and accepted a new council named by his uncles. All his favourites were ousted, and the duke of Gloucester had the government in his hands.

Pole was impeached. The charge, though trumpery, was specious, and to be accused of malversation was to be condemned. As charge on charge were made, the king, who sat in court, listening to the evidence against his servant, sighed :

'O Michael, Michael, see what thou hast done!'

The main article against Pole was, that while he held the seals, he had bought some land from the crown at less than the market-price. He proved this article to be a lie. But what are proofs of innocence where the accuser is the judge ? Pole was condemned ; his sentence being, that he be deprived of office, taken into arrest, and imprisoned during the king's pleasure. The intention was, that Pole should rot in jail so long as Gloucester reigned.

Here Simon de Burley intervened with help.

As Constable of Windsor Castle, Burley had command, not only of the royal house, but of the ordinary prison in the Norman tower. If Pole

were sent to Windsor as the place of his confinement, he would lie in friendly hands, would suffer less than in the Tower of London, and in spite of royal dukes might possibly escape. Richard was used to having Pole's advice; and if the fallen man were lodged at Windsor, the king might see him either day or night. When Richard was required to name a jail for Michael de la Pole, his late chancellor, he ordered him to be taken to Windsor Castle, and to be kept a 'close prisoner' till his pleasure should be further known. Pole occupied the Norman tower, from which there was a passage to the royal house.

Simon de Burley was suspected by the lords of giving this advice to Richard; and the stout old Constable was marked by Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick, as the second victim of their spite.

One day when the king was in his bath, Arundel, now become his minister, and in truth his jailor, gave their malice tongue. Railing against the Constable, he went so far as to assert that Simon de Burley deserved to be put to death. To this opinion the helpless king replied:

'I know no reason why he should be put to death.'

Burley stood by Pole, like friend by friend.

As soon as parliament rose, the gates of Norman tower were opened, and the prisoner was again at large.

Richard now slipped away from Windsor Castle into Wales, leaving the duke of Gloucester and his friends in full possession of the government. Vere and Tresilian, Pole and Bramber, rode from Windsor with the king; all bent on setting aside the recent acts, and ousting Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick from the council. Tresilian kept his post on the bench. Burley stayed at Windsor, keeping an eye on the king's enemies from his eyrie in the Constable's tower.

Richard, though at large, was hardly free. Power had gone from him. His new chancellor, Thomas of Ely, was in London with the duke, his uncle, using the seals as they saw fit, with hardly any reference to himself.

Vere, feeble and headlong Vere, was full of ardour. By a single stroke, he thought he could undo the evil into which his friends had blundered. Windsor was safe, for Windsor was in Burley's hands. The Tower, he thought, was also safe; that fortress being in the hands of Thomas, earl of Kent, son of the Fair Countess, and half-brother to the king. Bramber assured him that the city

might be counted on the royal side. Vere was strong in Wales and in the Midland counties; Oxford belonged to him, and he had friends in Lancashire and Cheshire. Nottingham, Tickhill, Pontefract, and the northern fortresses, were in royalist hands. Pole, as admiral, might secure the fleet. Vere fancied that a mere unfurling of the king's flag would call a loyal nation under arms.

Aware of Vere's design, Gloucester put out reports that bad men were advising the king to lay a new tax, as grinding as that poll-tax which had brought the Kentish men up to London bridge. A tax, his agents whispered, was to be laid on fires, a noble on each fire. The tale was false; but tales need not be true in order to excite alarm. The country started into rage against those 'bad men' who wanted to put a tax on fires. Who were these Poles and Veres, that they should have the ear of kings? Pole had recently been convicted of a breach of trust. And Vere? The passion of all honest men was now condensing and descending on the head of Vere.

Indolent, luxurious, fickle as the king himself, this favourite was of a nature to excite con-

tempt. Richard, in his nature sexless, was incapable of the vices which disgraced his friend, but he was blind to every fault in the man he had chosen to call his own. In his eyes Vere was perfect ; perfect in beauty, perfect in council, perfect in war.

Other eyes saw nothing in Vere beyond flaws of temper and defects of heart. Empty and pretentious, like his father, he was wanting in the domestic virtues which had just sufficed to prevent his father from sinking under public scorn.

An anecdote of that father was revived, to the disparagement of his son. One day, this story said, when Edward the Black Prince was staying with his captains at the palace of St. Andrew, at Bordeaux, a cup of wine was brought into the cabinet by a page. The Black Prince drank, and passed the cup to Chandos. After Chandos drank, the wine was offered to Oxford, who, indignant that Chandos had tasted first, refused the cup, saying in a sneering tone, 'Carry it, sirrah, to thy master, Chandos ; let him drink instead.'

The page replied : 'He has already drunk.'

Losing his temper, Oxford snarled : 'Drink,

then, drink yourself; for, by St. George, if you do not, I will dash it on your face.'

But, frightened by the page's look, the lad being bold of face, and ready to quaff the wine, he lowered his voice, took up the cup, and held it to his lips. Chandos had seen his act and heard his speech, but took no notice till the prince was gone. Then he stept up to Oxford, and inquired:

'Are you displeased that I, who am the Constable of this country, drank the first? I may well drink before you, since my lord the king, and all his princes, have ordained it so.'

Oxford looked big and martial. Chandos smiled; for Chandos was the greatest soldier in the camp. With crushing frankness, he retorted:

'True, you were at Poictiers; many of those present don't know the reason why so well as I do. I will tell them; they will not forget. When my lord the prince returned from Narbonne to this city, you ran away to England. What said to you, my lord the king? He asked about his son, and why you had come back without the prince. You hung your head in shame. What said his grace? He bade you hurry back; he gave you four days only, and he threatened

you with forfeiture of all your lands. Not of your own will you joined the prince. You commanded forty lances, I commanded sixty. Say now, sir, whether I, the Constable of Aquitaine, have not the right to drink before you ?'

Oxford hung his head, unable to reply, and wishing himself in any other place.

'What wonder that the Duke of Ireland, being the son of such a man, should do as he does ?' asked one of the knights.

'It is the king's fault,' said another. 'If he rules the kingdom, it is because the king allows him.'

For a long time the king refused to see the injuries which his favourite was inflicting on his wife, the young and beautiful Duchess Philippote. Yet these injuries were gross, and they were growing day by day.

Philippote, at the age of four, had been espoused by Vere, who at the age of ten had just succeeded to his family rank. This match had brought young Vere into the royal circle, where the heir-presumptive, Richard of Bordeaux, had grown attached to him. On Richard's marriage to Anne of Prague, Philippote, now countess of Oxford, reigned at Windsor with the queen,

much as her husband governed through the king. At every joust and feast she had her place; in every favour from the crown she had her share. Always a Dame of St. George, she was now marchioness of Dublin and duchess of Ireland. But the man who owed his fortunes in the court to her, was wandering after other faces. She was under eighteen, when Vere began to neglect her for the sake of a Bohemian damsel in the queen's household. King and queen both favoured his unfaithfulness to his wife; Richard because the duke could do no wrong, Anne because she wished her damsel to succeed. The foreign woman held him off, except on terms of marriage; hoping to be a duchess, and to rank with ladies of the blood. Vere could only marry her by divorcing Philippote, his consort and benefactress. King and queen, straining both the English and the German power at Rome, assisted him to get a papal brief from Urban; when the royal lady, still in her teens, who had deigned to wed a subject, was disgraced and driven from Windsor Castle, and the stranger took her place. From that day every decent man in England was her friend. From York and Gloucester, to the poorest knight and squire, the same indignant cry went up against

the perjured husband and his foreign bride. No one, outside the court, acknowledged Philippote's successor. The royal race was held to be dishonoured in these shameful acts. The favourite's minor crimes were all forgotten in the odium of this outrage on his young and innocent wife. As Lydgate wrote :—

> Causeless he parted was from his wife,
> Which ground was of great debate and strife,
> And his destruction, if I shall not lie.

Among the many base compliances of Richard towards his favourite, none hurt him, as a king and as a man, so much as this encouragement of Vere's falsehood to his wife. Nor, in after times, was any memory of his evil deeds to rankle in his soul so long, as his remorse for this consent to the dishonour of his house.

CHAPTER XXX.

REHEARSING FOR WINDSOR.

1387.

The dukes were not yet certain of the city bands. Bramber had much authority in the guilds, for he was rich, prompt, daring, with a head for great affairs. Exton, the mayor, was with the duke, but Exton was a slow and timid fellow; and the sheriffs, Venour and Halstaff, were as slow and timid as himself. No help was to be got from them; yet, in a conflict of the barons with the king and court, the city might be all in all. In other contests, London had often delivered the deciding blows.

Gloucester had to play a comedy. Unpopular with the magistrates and with the guildmen, he had not the less a party in the wards, small in mere numbers, but discreet, audacious, and prepared to act. Richard was no soldier; nor, except

the stout old Constable of Windsor, had he one fighting man about him. Could they frighten him with a show?

A comedy was got up, in which the duke of Gloucester and a sham citizen, called Simon de Sudbury, were to play the leading parts. The drama was to be enacted in the royal house at Windsor, and to be produced with new and grand effects. It was now the thirteenth day of April, and St. George's day was near at hand. Burley was busy with the ring and barriers. Richard and his court were coming from the west—king, queen, Vere, Pole, and all their troop. The knights and ladies of the Order were arriving every hour. In ten days, every one would be at Windsor. Then would be their time for Gloucester's comedy to be produced.

A play requires rehearsal. Simon, the sham citizen, waited on the duke, accompanied by some burghers of his party, and were instantly admitted to his cabinet. Gloucester was younger than his brother York; but they had come to him, rather than to the elder duke, because he was so brave and steadfast! Simon began the dialogue, the burghers standing by and looking on:

'My lord, the good city of London recom-

mends itself to your care, and the citizens, as well as all the rest of England, entreat you to take on yourself the government of the realm, and learn from those who have possessed themselves of the kingdom how it has been governed. For the common people make bitter complaints, that taxes on taxes are imposed; and that the kingdom, since the king's coronation, has been more grievously oppressed than for fifty preceding years. No one knows how the money has been spent. Inquire into these things, my lord, and find a remedy, or things will turn out very ill.'

Gloucester, taking up the cue already marked for him, replied:

'My good sirs, I have listened to your words; but I am only one, and can do nothing of myself—unless you help me. I am well aware that you have cause for just complaint: not you alone, but those of other towns as well. I am the son of a king, and uncle of the present king, yet if I were to speak he would not hearken to my voice. He has advisers near him whom he trusts, even more than he trusts himself. They lead him as they like. If you would like to succeed in getting your grievances redressed, you must enter into a confederacy of towns, with some of the prelates

and barons, and then come before the king, where my brother of York and myself will be present to give you help.'

Simon and the citizens agreed to a confederacy of towns. But what were they to do and say? As to the first point, Gloucester proposed that sixty good men should ride to Windsor on the festival of St. George, and take up their position at the Castle gates, as 'men of London.' Troops of sixty men each should come from other places, such as Norwich, York, and Winchester, and also take up their positions at the Castle gates, as 'men of Norwich,' 'men of York,' and 'men of Winchester.' When they had taken up their ground, in sight of tower and rampart. they should crave an audience of the king. He, Gloucester, and his friends, would be at hand. What should they say? These words:

'Most dear lord, you were crowned when young, and have been ill advised. Nor have you paid much heed to your affairs, but taken mean and shifty counsellors. Things have gone wrong, as you have seen, and might have come to ruin but that God, in His mercy, stretched out His hand. We pray you, most redoubted lord, in presence of your uncles, as good subjects should

entreat their lord, that you give heed to matters, so that the crown, which came to you from the most powerful and gallant king this country ever possessed, may be sustained in honour, and the people, who now complain, secure their just rights and privileges. This you swore when you were crowned. We also pray you to summon the three estates of the realm, that they may look into the doings of your counsellors. Those who have done well shall hold their places while you please to keep them; those who have done ill shall be removed, and others put into their seats: first, with your assent, then with the assent of your uncles, and the lords and prelates of your kingdom.'

Simon, the sham citizen, made a note of Gloucester's words—words fitter to be spoken to a captive prince than to a sovereign on his throne. Gloucester, aware how Richard would reply to such advice, went on:

'When you have said all this to the king, he will answer you. If he should say, he will consider of it, cut the parley short. Declare that you will have no more delays. Press on him; frighten him, and frighten his minions. Speak out boldly. Say the country will endure no more. Say it is wonderful how men have borne so long. My

brother and myself will be at hand, also the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Earls of Arundel, Salisbury, and Northumberland. If we are not there, say nothing till we come. We are the chief men in England, and will second what you say. He will attend to us, unless he should be very ill advised. No doubt he will appoint a day. This is the advice I have to give you, and the remedy for your many wrongs.'

'My lord,' returned the citizens, 'you have spoken loyally, but it will be difficult for us to find the king and as many lords as you have named in his presence.'

'Not at all,' replied the duke. 'St. George's day comes ten days hence. The king will be at Windsor. You can reckon on the duke of Ireland and Sir Simon de Burley being there. Many of their friends will come. My brothers and myself are certain to be present. Salisbury will be there. Come, and you can act as things turn out.'

Simon and the citizens engaged to be at Windsor—sixty mounted persons calling themselves 'men of London'—on the morrow of St. George's day.

Then Gloucester sent a summons to the king. Affairs, he urged, were growing worse and worse.

The towns were rising. London was uneasy. Richard must come to Westminster, and face the discontent. Unless he came at once, and satisfied his people, no one—not even the duke himself—could answer for the public peace.

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN THE GREAT HALL.

1387.

Unable to refuse his uncle, yet unwilling to obey such orders, Richard stopped short at Windsor Castle. He was safer in the royal house, with Burley in command, than he should feel in Westminster, and even at the Tower. Burley was above suspicion; but the king had no such confidence in his brother Kent. Kent seemed disposed to trim. Unlike the honest Constable of Windsor, who had nothing but his warlike name at risk, Kent had exalted rank and great estates to lose. The citizens, as Richard heard, were of unsettled mood—one day inclined to side with Richard, next day shouting for the duke. At Windsor Castle only he felt safe.

And then St. George's day was nigh. Even if

he went to London first, he must remove to Windsor for St. George's day.

Attended by a splendid court, Richard and his queen were present at the jousts and shows. Two royal dukes were there, each with a train of knights and peers. Courtney looked on, and Wykeham, who had built the chapel and the royal house, surveyed the scene. Arundel was at sea, cruising in the Channel; but his friends, Northumberland and Salisbury, joined the court; being in the secret of what was going on. The jousts went off with spirit, and the evening revels closed with song and dance.

Next morning Richard was surprised. News came into his cabinet that a company of sixty horsemen had arrived from London, and were taking up their quarters at his Castle gates. No doubt his Constable could brush such troops aside; but by-and-bye came news that a second troop of sixty mounted men had come from York, who were also taking up their quarters at his Castle gates. Then followed other troops of sixty men, each coming in as from a county town. The matter had been done so swiftly, silently, and secretly, that every one seemed taken by surprise. These leaguers all took up their

quarters in the town—by preference at his Castle gates.

To Richard they appeared an army, and in fact they had possession of the town and bridge. On asking what they wanted, he was told they wanted him—to see him, and to tell him of their grievances. A bold and hardy lot they seemed; well mounted fellows, rough of speech and aspect; men unlikely to depart on anybody's word. What should be done? His impulse was to slip away—ride through the forest glades, and put some miles between his visitors and himself. If he were quick, he might be leagues away before those men of London and men of Winchester were aware of his departure by the privy gate.

If Burley, mounting his men, had moved away at once, they might have reached a place of safety; but the Constable knew no fear, and he was not aware until too late that he himself was the selected victim of these agents of the royal dukes.

York, Gloucester, and Salisbury, striding into the king's cabinet, laid their orders on the king—who was in truth no longer master of his house. Their words were few and to the point:

'My lord, you cannot leave. These visitors who demand to see you are deputed by your

chiefest towns. You must receive them, and either give an answer to their words, or take your time to think what should be done.'

Sorely against his will the king consented to remain.

A council was convened, in which the enemies of Burley, Vere, and Pole, were strong. York and Gloucester, Courtney and Wykeham, Salisbury and Northumberland, took their places at the board. Most of these councillors were in Gloucester's secret, and were ready to use his sixties to coerce their sovereign. They resolved to see the sixties in a body; not by deputies in the royal cabinet, but in a mass; the whole array of stalwart and uproarious fellows at a rush. Three or four hundred men, all clamouring for redress, might frighten Richard into anything—even into a surrender of his crown.

But where could they receive so great a crowd? The rooms in the king's house were small, adapted for domestic use. St. George's chapel could not be profaned. Except the great hall, built by Henry of Winchester in the lower ward, and now abandoned to the rats and owls, no room in Windsor Castle would contain the crowds now waiting at the gates. This hall was chosen, and the king was

led from his apartments into the lower baily by his uncles and the other lords—to stand, in that deserted chamber of his fathers, face to face with an offended and insurgent multitude.

Not a single cool and steadfast friend was at his side. Instead of Nevill, he saw Courtney and Wykeham. In the place of Vere and Pole, stood York and Gloucester. When his eyes sought Burley and Bramber, they fell on Salisbury and Northumberland. The place, the company, all told him that he was left to stand or fall alone.

The doors being opened, Simon and the sixties surged into the hall. Silence being called, Simon harangued the king, repeating the whole speech in Gloucester's words. Richard replied, to them—as he had done before—with the imprudence of a schoolboy:

'Commons of England! your requests are large and pressing. They cannot be considered now, for we are not staying long in Windsor, nor are all our council with us; in fact, the greater part are absent. I therefore bid you all go home, and so remain, unless we send for you, till Michaelmas, when Parliament shall meet. Come thither, and lay your requests before us. We will then submit them to our council. What we think proper

shall be granted, what we think improper shall be refused. Don't fancy that we are to be ruled by our people. That has never been the case. For our part we see nothing but what is just in our government, and in those who govern under us.'

Seven of the citizens answered him, each speaking, under Gloucester's guidance, to the same effect:

'Redoubted lord, under your grace's favour, your justice is weak in the kingdom, and you know nothing of what you ought to know; for you never ask, and never look into things; and your advisers will not tell you on account of the wealth they are amassing. There is no justice, sir king, in cutting off heads, hands, and feet. Justice consists in guarding every man in his right, in taking care that he lives in peace and has no reason for complaint. And we must say that you are putting us off too long in naming Michaelmas. No time is like the present. We are all of one mind; we must have an account, and shortly, from those who have ruled your kingdom for the past nine years. If they can give a good account, we shall rejoice, and leave them in their seats. Those who cannot render a good account shall be

treated accordingly — by the commissioners named by you and by our lords your uncles.'

Richard looked at his experienced uncles. They were princes of the blood, unused to hear such words from burgher lips. What would they say? Gloucester, in view of these bold sayings, answered, as he had promised Simon, that he saw nothing in these demands of the citizens but what was fair and just.

'What do you say, fair brother of York?'

York answered by agreement to the same effect:

'As God may help me, what they say is true.'

To all these words the primate and chancellor gave assent. All the great peers were with the dukes. Frightened by their concert, Richard begged the peers and prelates not to answer in the lump, but one by one, each speaking for himself. They murmured as before — they were of one mind, and they spoke with one voice. What the dukes had said was true. Richard turned once more to his uncle, Gloucester, but the duke repeated in effect his former words:

'Sir, it is only fair that you should learn how your money has been spent.'

Quailing before his uncles and his barons,

Richard looked through the assembly for the faces of Vere and Pole. Overawed by the king's uncles, these councillors had slunk apart, and even when appealed to by his majesty, held their tongues. At length the king gave way.

'Well, I consent to what you ask. Let all these men be sent away. Summer is coming on —the time for my amusement of hunting. I want to lose no time.'

Gloucester was willing that the king should hunt and be amused, so long as he refrained from meddling with affairs of state. He wanted a commission of inquiry named, of which his brother and himself should be the chiefs. So much, he said, must be resolved at once. Richard was quick enough to see that what his uncle wanted was a transfer of the royal power. He paused. The dukes insisted that inquiry must begin at once. Their purpose was to strike down Burley, boldest and most faithful of their nephew's ministers. If Burley were in prison, they had no one else to fear. But he was never named by them. A word of menace might suffice to put the stout old captain on his guard—and even fire the king with courage to resist. They merely asked for power to search into the state accounts.

Unable to move his uncles from their purpose, Richard turned to the citizens. Was there any such need for haste? Must all these things be done at once?

'Yes,' cried the sham citizen, 'we entreat it of you, noble king. We likewise beg these lords to take part in it, and most of all our lords your uncles.'

Coyly the dukes accepted power. Only for the king's sake and the country's sake, they undertook to govern. When the king was pledged so far, the commoners said they wished the reverend fathers of Canterbury and Winchester to assist the royal dukes. Richard was aware that these two priests were enemies of his friends; but he was fagged with standing in that mouldy hall, chaffering with his uncles in the presence—almost in the custody—of that burgher crowd. He wanted to escape.

Would the two bishops consent to serve in such affairs? Courtney and Wykeham both agreed to serve. What more could Richard do? He yielded—with the saving clause that he would punish them soundly when the time arrived. The bishops' names secured, the commoners asked for Salisbury and Northumberland. What could he do? His Constable had no army at his back.

Richard must gain a little time. Then other names were added to the list; as many as the duke of Gloucester pleased. When all was settled, Richard was required to say that he consented to the whole, not out of fear and force, but of his own free will, and at the prayer of his good uncles and his faithful lords!

Gloucester broke up the conference of St. George by citing the Constable of Windsor to appear at Westminster on the 1st of May, and answer for his accounts. The time was short, but Gloucester, as he afterwards alleged, was acting in 'dread of his life.' To strike at Burley he must strike while public discontent seemed hot and high.

CHAPTER XXXII.

SIMON DE BURLEY.

1387.

Burley was charged by the commissioners with defalcations to a vast amount. He answered those commissioners that the money had been fairly spent, the audit truly vouched; but whether it were so or not, he, a soldier, not a financier, was but one at the council-board, casting no more than a single vote. If he were wrong, the other members of the council shared his fault.

Vere, acting on the hints of his Cornish cousin, the lord chief justice, sent a message to the veteran, urging him to scud before the storm and wait for better times. This message ran:

'I hear that you are to be arrested and sent to prison till you pay the sum you are charged with. Do not dispute the matter. Go whither they may

order. I will make your peace with the king, though they may all have sworn to the contrary.'

Vere promised Burley, that, however great the fine imposed on him by the commissioners should be, he would pay the money, or as much of it as would satisfy the dukes. 'You know the Constable of France owes me forty thousand francs for Jean de Blois. This sum he will soon pay me. I will offer it to the commissioners, which for the moment will satisfy them. But the king is sovereign; he will pardon you all the balance; for that balance will be due to him, and to no other man.'

Burley for an instant stood in doubt. While he was still at large, he might escape across the Straits; leaving the favourites to fight their fight. A soldier, he was worth his salt in any of the foreign camps. While he was doubting whether to stay or fly, he wrote to Vere:

'Were I not sure that you would help me with the king, I would cross the sea and go to the court of Prague. I should be well received.'

Vere begged him not to think of leaving them; giving up the game as lost before the first card had been played:

'I will never forsake you. Are we not com-

panions, equally assailed? Ask time for payment of the fine. Have no fear of death; they will not go so far as that. By Michaelmas things will take a turn.'

Long before Michaelmas, Vere expected to be master of the field and master of the king. Pole was eager to unfurl the royal banner, and annul the recent acts of parliament by his sword. The lords and commons were to him no better than the king's bench and the common pleas — mere courts for putting into shape the sovereign will. Who held the sword, could make, un-make, and re-make acts of parliament as he pleased. Vere added, as a comfort to the Constable in his passing trouble:

'Let me once have the king in my power, and I shall have my way. What he does now, he is compelled to do. We must content these cursed Londoners, and put an end to the clamours they have raised against us and against our friends.'

Burley, trusting to the favourite and his Cornish cousin, held his tongue, and was committed to the Tower.

'My lords, I shall obey your orders, as I ought, and go where you shall please to send me,' he replied to the commissioners; but he asked for

clerks to assist him in drawing up his accounts, and for a little time to raise the money they imposed on him as fine.

'We agree,' said Gloucester; and the veteran was conducted to the vault, which he was not to leave again until he left it for the block.

Burley's strong hand being lost to Windsor, Vere and Pole took counsel with their friends. Given over to his enemies, Burley was unlikely to escape the Tower. Windsor Castle would get another constable; some creature of the royal dukes; a spy on them, a curb on king and queen. The king might be no longer master of his house.

Pole urged that they should take Tresilian's law for law; engage the royal dukes with their own weapons; get the king and queen away; retire on some impregnable fortress of the midland shires; denounce the act of parliament as lawless; call the king's tenants to his banner, and proceed against the dukes as public enemies. There might be war, but Pole was ready to encounter war. If law and force were on their side, the war might soon be over, and the king delivered from his foes. They had Tresilian with them, and Tresilian answered for the law. They had Bramber with

them, and Bramber answered, though less boldly, for the city bands. Vere fancied he could answer for the main array. Then let the king invest him with the title of lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and his business would be done.

Burley, the only man who might have curbed these counsels by a soldier's prudence, was a prisoner in the Tower.

Vere, supported by Tresilian, echoed Pole's ideas; and the two men went to Nevill, the archbishop, with their fantasies. Lodging near the king's cabinet, Nevill was furious at his rival's triumph. Courtney had become more hateful in his sight than ever, and the angry archbishop was disposed to try all means of hurling him to the ground. Vere told the primate of his hopes. The law was on their side. Tresilian, lord chief justice, answered for the law; maintaining that the recent acts of parliament were void. Nevill caught at this idea. Had Tresilian answered for the law? Had he the power to answer for his brethren on the bench? Nevill knew well enough. No justice had such power. A judge was like a baron, and must answer for himself. Could they find out the sentiments of the bench? Next in authority to

Tresilian, stood Belknap, lord chief justice of the common pleas. Belknap was a friend of Arundel. His hand had drawn the bills which Tresilian now denounced as void in law. Could he be frightened into an admission that those acts were void? If so, the bench of judges might be frightened into following suit, drawn on by the example of their eminent chiefs.

Nevill, a man in age and office likely to have weight with a chief justice, undertook the task of sounding Belknap. Nevill sent for him to Windsor. The archbishop had been placed on the new council, so that Belknap, as a judge, was bound to answer his request. When Belknap entered the archbishop's cabinet, he found good reason for surprise. The acts which he had framed were lying on the table. He was told to take them up and read them through. When he had finished, he was asked point-blank to say that his bills were null and void, as being derogatory to the king. Replying meekly, Belknap submitted that the hope of those who framed them was to do good service to the king and kingdom. Nevill told him that he was required to sign and seal these articles, which his brother, the Cornish lord chief justice, had subscribed:

1. That the acts of parliament were contrary to the king's royalty and prerogative, especially in being passed against his will.

2. That every man who had either helped to pass those bills or moved the king to sanction them, deserved to suffer death, unless the king should pardon him.

Belknap was a timid man. To sign these articles was to sign a lie—a lie that sentenced a majority of the bishops, peers, and commoners to a traitor's death. A bolder man than the chief justice, might have been appalled. But Nevill pressed him roundly; he must choose his side; a king's chief justice should be with his master; he had already played the truant; majesty was wroth with him; he must hasten to make amends. 'Find out some way,' said Nevill, 'to annul those acts of parliament, or you shall die a traitor's death.'

In vain the judge appealed to his good intentions. 'You must find a way,' returned the primate. 'You must find a way. Annul those acts, or ——'

Belknap begged the archbishop to allow him time to speak with Vere. Nevill consented. So the poor chief justice spoke to Vere and Pole,

and afterwards sought an audience of the king. All three addressed him in the tone assumed by Nevill. Richard was harsh, and Belknap quitted the royal cabinet at Windsor Castle, trembling for his life. How was he to find that way?

Richard removed from Windsor to the west, attended by Nevill, Vere, and Pole. From west they rode up north. Their flight was swift,—their movement nervous and uncertain. Vere, having much property in the midland counties, thought he could raise an army in those parts. Nottingham, a royal fortress, offered him an impregnable position. He believed that law and force were with the king, but he had got no answer yet from Belknap and the other judges. While the court reposed at Woodstock, Belknap received an order to attend the king. He came in fear. The articles were laid before him once again. He whimpered of his good intentions. Richard flew into a rage and left his poor chief justice in a tremor of mortal fear.

At length the court reached Nottingham. The judges were summoned up from Westminster, and the sheriffs from surrounding shires were ordered to attend. Law and force were to surround the king.

The royalists began with law. Tresilian forced

his brother justice, and his other brethren of the bench, to sign his articles. Belknap held out a trifle longer than the rest; but Vere and Pole stood over him, swords in their hands, threatening to kill him on the spot unless he signed. At length he signed; knowing that he was acting under craven fear. Throwing down his pen, he muttered miserably:

'A ship, a horse, or a halter to hang me—the death I deserve. If I had not done it, I should have been killed by your hands. Now, I have gratified the king's pleasure, I deserve to die.'

The sheriffs were less pliant than these judges. 'Can you raise your counties for the king?' asked Vere. 'Hardly,' the sheriffs answered, 'for the people of these counties think the lords are good friends to the king, and hence but few of them would fight against those lords.' Then Vere turned round. 'Would the good people of your counties vote for the king's friends? A parliament must soon be called. The king might indicate his friends. Would they support his list?' The sheriffs answered, that people in those parts were stiff and high, and an attempt to turn their votes in favour of this or that candidate might do more harm than good.

Nothing could be done. Bramber, next after Burley the most daring and sagacious of Richard's councillors, proposed to march from the Trent due south. 'Unfurl the standard!' he exclaimed, 'and let men see they have a king.' Taking Tresilian's law for law, he felt assured that if the flag were raised at Paul's Cross, many of the Londoners who now stood off, would rally to that flag. A bold word roused their spirits. Asked what he would do, Bramber proposed to take a couple of knights and thirty horsemen, ride on to Windsor Castle secretly, and stealing thence to London in the night-time, see Sir Simon Burley at the Tower, arrange his plans with the earl of Kent, unfurl the king's banner, and give battle to the royal dukes.

Vere took the city magistrate at his word, gave him his thirty horsemen, and entrusted to his hands the royal flag.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

RADCOTE BRIDGE.

1387.

Bramber's intention was to ride by cross roads and secluded heaths to Windsor Castle. There, he was to rest his men and horses, pick up news from scouts and officers, and use his knowledge of affairs as guide and means. From Windsor he could look on the great city, while his troop of thirty horse would not be noticed in the royal stalls. Windsor Castle was to be his quarters; from which he must set out, to which he must return. Burley, though a prisoner in the Tower, still held the post of Constable, and one of his lieutenants lodged in the Constable's tower. Should things go wrong with Bramber and his escort on the roads, the Norman keep afforded him a safe retreat.

Folding up the royal banner—not to be dis-

played until his party reached St. Paul's—Bramber put himself at the head of his troop and stole away from Oxford. Riding swiftly and in silence by the country roads, they entered Windsor in the dark. Putting up their steeds, they dined and held a conference. Such news as they could learn seemed good; so good that they resolved to act at once. Exton, the mayor, weak in himself and anxious for his city charters, might be carried by the stream. Kent, the king's brother, held the Tower. Arundel, the man whom they had most to fear, was still at sea. A cry to arms, they hoped, would bring the guildmen to St. Paul's. If Kent were staunch, the day might soon be won. If Kent and Burley sallied from the Tower, and if the guildmen joined them at St. Paul's, the king would find his uncles at his feet.

Much, Bramber felt, might turn on speed. If he were slow in movement, scouts were sure to dog him and report his raid. The city watches would be set on quay and bridge, as well as at the landward gates, and nothing could be gained without a fight. An hour might now decide. Next evening he must be with Kent and Burley, on the morrow after he must plant the standard at

St. Paul's. He ought to steal from royal lodge to royal lodge in secresy, taking advantage of the darkness to approach the city. At Westminster, he could pick up boats. Unseen, unheard, and unsuspected, he might reach the Tower.

Snatching an hour of sleep, he quitted Windsor by the private gate, struck through the glades for Staines, and crossed the bridge at daybreak, heading for the royal lodge at Shene. Here, in the stables, he concealed his men all day. At dusk, he crept along the river bank to Kensington palace, where he put up his horses, and taking the standard with him, stole along the lanes and by the fields to Westminster. Here boats were hired. The tide was ebbing, and the oarsmen pulled for London bridge. No city watch was kept that night. Unchallenged from the bank, they shot an arch, and swung round at the Tower.

Ghosts from the grave could not have filled the earl of Kent with more alarm. He knew his midnight visitors, and guessed the business they were on—a dangerous game, in which the stakes were human heads. Fear blanched his cheek as he inquired their business at the Tower :

'Ye come from Windsor ?'

'Yea ; from Windsor and Oxford.'

Kent desired them to go back into their boats. Should Gloucester hear he had received these knights from Oxford, he would not only strip him of his post, but cast him into Beauchamp tower. Instead of offering to confer with Burley, and to join in their adventure, Kent implored them to regain their boats.

'Why so?' his visitors inquired; 'are we not knights attached to the king's person? Surely we have a right to lodge in any of the king's castles?'

Bramber spoke about his hopes of raising London for the king. Kent replied in a more ominous whisper:

'You will hardly find things so. This town and all within it stand in the king's obedience, but only while he allows his uncle to govern in his name. I tell you for your good. When daylight comes, please God, and news goes out that persons have arrived in the king's behalf, you will see this castle beset by citizens on every side, and they will never leave till they have gained admission, and observed who lodges here. Should you be found, they will carry you to the king's uncles. You can guess the consequence. I feel assured that these people are so much enraged against the

duke of Ireland and the other councillors, that if once they lay hands on you, you will never escape with life.'

Bramber turned from him, and spoke with the two knights apart. Each felt that under such a man as Kent, no business could be done. Their persons were unsafe. Would Kent conceal them till the morrow, and provide them with a boat to get away? He promised them so much; and with this promise they were fain to rest content. Sending for all the postern keys, Kent laid them, in Bramber's presence, in his own bedroom.

No sleep came near their eyes. Rising in the night, they held a council on the best course to be taken for their safety. They had no belief in Kent. Not that they expected treachery at his hands; but if attacks were made, they feared his resolution might give way. Should they wait till dawn? If news got out that they were in the Tower, no means of leaving would avail them. London Bridge cut off retreat. Beset on every side by peril, they resolved to go, as they had come, covered by the darkness, with the royal banner in their hands, still folded to the staff. If they would go at once, Kent offered them a barge.

Hiding by the river banks all day, they crept at night to Kensington palace, where they found their horses. Riding by way of Chertsey bridge, they passed through the Windsor glades, and entered the upper baily by the private gate.

Bramber was now convinced that nothing could be done, unless the king himself rode into London with a manly face. If Richard showed himself, the gates, he thought, would open and the guildmen rally to his flag. Vere shared this view, and Richard, learning that his uncle Gloucester was away, took horse, and rode towards Stamford hill.

As Richard neared the capital, Exton and the aldermen came out to greet him. All the gates were opened, all the joy-bells rung, and in the midst of deafening shouts of welcome, Richard passed through the streets of his capital to his palace beyond Charing Cross. Nevill and Vere, Tresilian, Pole, and Bramber, rode with him down the Strand. These councillors fancied that the day was won. The judges had declared the law, the citizens had supplied the force to execute that law. What had they left to do, except annul the statute, liberate the Constable of Windsor, and

restore the treasury to Nevill, and the chancery to Pole? At leisure they might send their enemies to the block.

But they were quickly driven from this false paradise. Hardly were they housed at Westminster before tidings reached them that Gloucester was at Hackney downs. Richard, having no troops in hand, depended for his safety on the mayor and citizens. Would Exton and the citizens shut their gates? Exton and his brethren went to meet the duke at Hackney with their keys! Master of the field, the duke sent in Courtney to demand the instant surrender of Vere, Nevill, Pole, Tresilian, Bramber—all the king's councillors who were still at large!

The court was taken in a trap, and each man had to save himself. Richard alone was safe. Vere fled into the west, where he began to stir his Welsh and Irish tenants. Nevill, on a private hint from Courtney, disappeared. No prelate of his rank had ever yet been judged a traitor, and the barons had no wish to send an archbishop to the block. Pole slipped away to France.

Hunted out of London, Richard retired on Windsor Castle, where he tried to keep his court

alive. His five advisers were impeached. Richard tried to cover them, by an assumption that the quarrel with his uncle was a private matter, and by taking all the parties 'under his protection.' Gloucester only laughed. Richard sent for Exton and the aldermen, to advise with him on 'matters very near his heart.' But nothing came of their advice. The sword, and nothing but the sword, could now decide between the king and duke—the judges and the peers. Vere was afield with fifteen thousand men; and the alarm of war brought Henry of Bolingbroke into the field. Mowbray, the earl-marshal, was with Bolingbroke, blocking the Thames, and threatening Vere's communications with the west.

Like Richard of Bordeaux, Henry of Bolingbroke was a cousin of Vere's repudiated wife. Unlike Richard of Bordeaux, Henry of Bolingbroke regarded Vere as a dishonourable man. He yearned to meet that scoundrel in the open field. At Radcote bridge they met.

Vere turned at the first shock of Bolingbroke's pikes, and mounting a fresh horse, pushed for the bridge across the Thames. The bridge had been hewn down. Pressed by his fears, he faced up stream, hugging the bank, and lightening his

weight by dropping his gauntlet, sword, and casque. At the second bridge stood a company of archers. Dodging by the stream once more, he sought a ford. No ford was to be found. As night came on, he slipt from his horse, put off his cuirass, plunged into the stream, and swimming across, escaped with the loss of everything but life and limb. Hiding in the woods by day, he stole into the western shires, where for the moment he was safe. His enemies believed him dead. Horse, casque, sword, and cuirass being found next morning by the river bank, his pursuers fancied that he had been drowned.

Tresilian got away from Radcote bridge, and after many wanderings, joined his defeated cousin in the west.

Bramber was taken in a western town, rallying the remnants of a broken troop. Brought up to London, he was given in charge to Kent; and the king's brother, having saved himself by prudence, lodged him near his friend, the Constable of Windsor Castle, in the Tower.

One day, in the midst of all these troubles, Richard was convulsed with a vexatious merriment. Beauchamp, his stolid captain of Calais, came to Windsor with a man whom he had taken in the act

of flight. The man was habited in a huckster's gown; his beard was shaved; and on his arm he carried a market creel. Beauchamp had caught this fellow offering capons in the market-place for sale. Who was he? Beauchamp would not say. His secret was for Richard and for no one else. When brought into the king's cabinet, he produced his man—no less a personage than the chancellor, Michael de la Pole.

What was it all about? Beauchamp replied that he had done his duty. Finding this fellow vending capons in the market-place, and knowing him to be lord chancellor, he was sure that something must be wrong. His duty was, he thought, to carry his captive to the king, and leave his majesty to judge. Richard was amazed. His first step was to put that stupid fellow into ward; but even in the Norman tower a man might blab; and Richard had to think of his creature Pole. If Gloucester got an inkling of his presence at Windsor Castle, he would probably storm the keep, and Pole would soon be in the Tower and on the block.

In a day or two Beauchamp went back to his command, and Pole left Windsor in a new disguise.

Not one of the king's friends remained with him at Windsor Castle. Nevill and Pole had gone abroad; Vere and Tresilian were in the west; Burley and Bramber were his prisoners in the Tower.

Vere's colleagues were destroyed at Radcote bridge.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A FEAST OF DEATH.

1388.

Early in February, Richard rode from Windsor Castle to meet the body which is known in history as the 'merciless parliament.' Though treated like a king in courtesy, he was shorn of nearly all his powers. The king was now 'the king and council.' After what had passed between his favourites and their opponents, he desired his people to be asked to send up men as free as might be from the rancour caused by recent strife. His wish was overruled. Gloucester had won the day, and meant to have his own. Victory at Radcote bridge meant mastery in Westminster hall.

Gloucester had need of votes. How else were Vere and Pole, Bramber and Burley, to be ruined and destroyed? Not by ordinary process in the courts. The judges, as he knew, both those of

the king's bench and those of the common pleas, had been against the cause now crowned with victory. Tresilian and Belknap had set their hands to a document, in which the dukes and earls were denounced as traitors and assigned the penalty of death. Had not the whole bench of judges signed that paper and endorsed that sentence? Law was useless to the duke.

How, then, in spite of law, were Vere and Tresilian, Bramber and Burley, to be crushed? By parliament; a packed and venal parliament. No other way lay open to the men of Radcote bridge.

When the two houses met, the bishop of Ely opened the proceedings. Richard, seated on his throne, surrounded by the victors, listened to the bishop's words, aware that his respect was feigned and false. When silence came, Gloucester advanced a step, and knelt before the throne — saying:

'My lord, I understand your majesty has been informed that I intend to depose you and make myself king. I ask a trial, and agree to stand by the award of parliament.'

Richard may not have understood his uncle's drift. Gloucester was unlikely to be aiming at the

crown. Youngest of all the sons of Edward the Third, he stood behind the offspring of Lionel of Antwerp, John of Gaunt, and Edmund of Langley. One at least of the younger princes, Henry of Bolingbroke, was not a man to be set aside.

Richard replied, that he had never thought him guilty, and relieved him of that charge. The duke's main object was secured. His conduct seemed to have been submitted to a public vote. If princes put themselves under parliament, how could lesser men reject the jurisdiction of that court? The mock submission of Gloucester paved the way for a real submission on the part of Burley, Vere, and Pole.

No less striking was Gloucester's next proposal:—that all great matters moved in parliament touching peers of the land should be discussed and judged by peers of the realm, and not by judges of the civil courts. The king allowed this claim; which raised his peers above the law.

Five lords, Gloucester, Bolingbroke, Arundel, Warwick, and Mowbray, impeached the king's friends and their abettors; Nevill, Vere, Tresilian, Bramber, Belknap, and the judges. Their act of impeachment, counting thirty-four articles, being voted, heralds strode out to the palace gates, and

summoned the defendants to appear. No one replied, and their default was put on record. A second and a third time horns were blown, and the defendants summoned. No one answered, and the lords, proceeding on default, pronounced their sentence. Vere, Nevill, Pole, and Tresilian, were condemned to death.

One of the offenders heard that summons from the heralds at the palace gate.

Vere, though in no immediate peril, had been anxious for news from London. What was King Richard doing? How were things going on in parliament? Were Bramber and the Constable of Windsor safe? Tresilian, no less anxious than himself for news, had offered to visit London in disguise, and let him know how things were looking for the king and the king's friends:

'I see how hard it is for you to find a trusty man to send. I will go up myself. My love for you will justify the risk.'

Disguised as a pedlar, mounted on a sorry jade, the lord chief justice had shambled on to Holborn, where he lodged at a poor inn; no one suspecting him to be other than he seemed, a pedlar from the western shires. Creeping about the courts and alleys, he had listened to men's

chatter, but had picked up nothing save the stalest news. To satisfy his craving, he had changed his lodgings and his dress.

Close by the palace stood an ale-house of the poorer class, kept by a woman who was careless what kind of men came to her den, so long as they drank her ale and paid their score. This ale-wife had a room to let, with window giving on the palace yard. Tresilian, in the habit of a yeoman, had engaged that room, and taken up his post of spy. His name had not been asked; for he had ceased to be a pedlar dressed in rags, and was now a farmer out of Kent. Sitting with his mug of ale at the open window, the Cornish lawyer had noted every one passing in and out of parliament—the royal dukes, the peers and burgesses, the clergy and courtiers—safe, as he found, in his disguise, his lodging and his mug of ale.

So passed some days. The heralds summoned him and the other judges to appear and justify their law. Crowds gathered round the gates to hear them call his name, the lord chief justice watching them from his window and behind his mug. Bramber was brought up from the Tower for trial. Kent attended him to the house, where Bramber, pleading not guilty, proposed to decide

the question of his honesty by the ordeal of battle —which he claimed the right to do in virtue of his knighthood. No one cared to take his challenge. At that moment, Tresilian, peering from his window, noticed a man below him in the street, with eyes intently fixed on him and on his mug of ale. Not liking that man's look, he backed into his room.

'That is Tresilian!' said that person in the street, a squire in Gloucester's service. Believing he had seen aright, that person crossed the road and stept inside the alehouse door. Meeting the ale-wife, he inquired:

'Tell me, good dame, on your troth, who is that man drinking upstairs? Is he alone or in company?'

The busy woman answered: 'On my troth, sir, I don't know his name. He has been here some time.'

To be certain of his man, that person sprang upstairs, opened the chamber door, looked in, observed the farmer well, and being satisfied that he saw before him no less a culprit than the lord chief justice, he put on a careless and misleading air. The two men eyed each other, yet pretending to see nothing. Said the intruding squire to the farmer, sipping his mug of ale:

'God keep you, master! Pardon my coming up. I thought you were one of my farmers from Essex. You are very like him. Do you come from Essex?'

'Not at all, sir. I come from Kent, where I hold lands under Sir John Holland. I want to lodge a complaint against some tenants of the archbishop of Canterbury, who are edging on my farm.'

A good shot; but the squire was quick enough to score against the Cornish man:

'If you will come with me into the hall, I will have a way made for you to lay your grievances before the lords.'

'Many thanks, sir; but not now; another time, I shall be glad to seek your help.'

Ordering a quart of ale for the good of the house, the squire threw down his money, and with a 'God be with you,' left that sham farmer to his drink.

Tresilian hoped the scene was over, but he kept a little in the shade, not wishing to attract fresh visitors from the street.

Slipping back to the council-room, that squire sent in an usher to the duke his master. 'I must see the duke at once on matters that concern him

and the council.' Instantly the door was opened, and the squire, advancing to the table, cried to his astonished chief:

'My lord, I bring you news—great news?

'Of what?' inquired the duke.

'My lord, I will tell it aloud, for it concerns not only you, but all the lords here present. I have seen Sir Robert Tresilian, disguised as a peasant, sitting in an ale-house, close by the palace gates.'

'Tresilian! Not the lord chief justice?'

'On my faith, my lord, and you shall have him dine with you, if you so please.'

'Aye! I should like that much; for he could tell us news about his master, the duke of Ireland. Go, and take him; but have power enough about to run no risk of failure.'

Leaving that council-room, the duke's man chose him out four bailiffs, tall and brawny fellows, who could hold a giant in their grip. Bidding them follow him cautiously, he told them to observe him well, and when they saw him point his finger at a man, to close on him and hold him fast. He met the lord chief justice on the inn staircase, coming from his room, and stopping him point-blank, said sternly:

'Tresilian, you are after no good, I fancy; and my lord of Gloucester sends for you to speak with him.'

'I am not Tresilian, but a tenant of Sir John Holland.'

'Your body is Tresilian's, though your attire is not.'

The sign was given, the four bailiffs rushed upstairs. All efforts of the lawyer to escape were vain. A crowd was gathering round the ale-house door; many in that crowd had seen the lord chief justice in his court. But he denied his name and person till he stood before the council-board. Gloucester was merry, with a savage kind of glee:

'Tresilian, what has brought you hither?'

'I was sent to learn the news.'

'How! You are not dressed like an honest man, but like a spy.'

'My lord, if I have done wrong, I trust you will excuse me; I have only done what I was ordered.'

Bramber's trial was adjourned, in order to proceed at once with that of the lord chief justice. Gloucester thirsted for his blood, and would not wait a second day. But little form was used. The

man had been condemned already by default, and no one thought of asking for his pleas, and trying him again. In Gloucester's words, the unhappy lord chief justice heard his knell:

'Tresilian, Tresilian, your actions are neither fair nor honest. You are a fool for coming to these parts, where no one cares for you, as you will shortly see. You and others of your faction have displeased my brother and myself. You have given the king bad advice, causing him to quarrel with his lords. And you have stirred the towns against me. But your day has come; look to yourself; for I will neither eat nor drink till you are dead.'

Tresilian was at once led out, thrown on a hurdle, and dragged over the stones to Tyburn. There he was first hung, then headed, and his body slung to the tree for kites and crows to gnaw.

Next day came Bramber's turn. His challenge to fight a champion named by his accusers was declined, and he was sentenced to be drawn and hanged. Within an hour, his headless trunk was dangling by Tresilian's side.

Belknap and the other judges were condemned and banished. Nevill, as a prelate, was permitted

to retire. Vere got away to Paris, whence he wandered up and down the country, shunned by all decent men, a ghost of what he had been in his happier days; regretted and forgiven by no one, save his ruined master and his deserted wife.

Burley, Constable of Windsor, was the last to fall. Accused of taking part in the late treasons, he denied his guilt. How could the Constable have taken part in Vere's advance? He was a prisoner in the Tower, and subject to the duke's control. The evidence was nothing: the majority was enough. They sentenced the old soldier to be drawn and hanged, to have his head chopped off, his quarters stuck on the city gates. Richard refused to have his veteran soldier hung and drawn. A wearer of the Garter, his brethren of that Order, though implacable with the man, had mercy on the knight. Gloucester consented that his enemy should die a soldier's death. Straight from the palace stair, he was conducted to Tower hill, where his white head was instantly severed from his trunk.

For many a reign to come, the Constable's lodgings in the lower baily of Windsor Castle knew no braver tenant than that doughty and faithful knight.

King Richard, left alone in the royal house, nursed in his heart the one great passion of his life; the passion of revenge for his abandoned favourites,—that eye for eye and tooth for tooth, which in the years to come he exacted from the victors; till the storm of passion rose against himself, and in the tempest of a civil war he, too, was driven in desperation from the royal hill.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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